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FIELD-MARSHAL MANNERHEIM

FIELD-MARSHAL MANNERHEIM

By
TANCRED BORENIUS

*With 32 Illustrations
and 3 Maps*

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TO
THE CLIO OF CHAPEL STREET
AND
THE GHOSTS OF BELGRAVE SQUARE

PREFACE

THE eyes of all the world were lately fixed on Field-Marshal Mannerheim, the leader of the Finnish Army, in its heroic struggle against Russian aggression. To every Finn it was, however, obvious, from such public and private comments as were being made for months, how very little was known outside Finland about the personality of Finland's national hero and, also, about the historical background against which he must be seen to be properly appreciated. Many of the warmest sympathisers with Finland in her recent ordeal, tended to lay disproportionate emphasis on the progress which the country had made since declaring her independence twenty-two years ago: and it must therefore be stressed, that Finland is not a country of yesterday, but that she has political and other traditions of very long standing. Again, the history of Finland during the past forty or fifty years shows the complex working of a great many factors; and it is these which have provided that remarkable result of social and political reconciliation which is the salient characteristic of the internal situation in Finland at the present moment.

As one who for many years past has had the privilege of knowing Field-Marshal Mannerheim, and has also taken some slight part in Finnish political life, I have thought that I might perhaps usefully attempt to supply the want of a book in English in which the Field-Marshal would be envisaged from the double point of view of the interest of his personality

as such, and of his relation to Finland's past and present. The book was begun at a time when Finland's epic struggle was firing imaginations and raising hopes everywhere: it is completed at a moment when not only political considerations impose much discretion in the discussion of the events of yesterday, but when a Finn writing about his country cannot escape an uncomfortable feeling of being guilty of exhibitionism.

The only biography of Field-Marshal Mannerheim among those published so far which has a claim to be regarded as a serious contribution to history is the one written in Swedish by the late Dr. Kai Donner and published in 1934. The author had the advantage of close personal relations with his subject, and in many ways his volume provides the basis upon which every subsequent biographer of the Field-Marshal must build. First-hand information of the utmost value is also contained in the fourth volume (1930) of M. Bernhard Estlander's book, likewise in Swedish, on eleven decades in Finnish history (*Elva årtionden ur Finlands historia*): notably the conversations, reported in this work, may with full confidence be accepted as authentic and historically accurate. A book of essays by various authors, published a few years ago in Helsingfors under the title *G. G. Mannerheim*, must further be mentioned as making some important material accessible to the historian; and a good deal of relevant information may, of course, be culled from the extensive literature on the War of Independence, which has seen the light in Finland. Of Field-Marshal Mannerheim's late sister, that remarkable woman, Baroness Sophie Mannerheim, whom I also had the honour of knowing, the book by Mlle Berta Edelfelt (1932) gives a very vivid biographical sketch.

In the present volume, the names of localities in Finland

are given in the form which is the traditional one in England : but the Index contains references to such alternative forms as lately have tended to come into use.

For encouragement to undertake a task, of which I have never concealed to myself the difficulties, and for sympathetic help throughout the work, I feel deeply grateful to my friend, Madame de Janzé. Another friend, Mr. Herbert Read, has also put me under a heavy debt of gratitude by constructive criticism most kindly offered while the book was being seen through the press. For the loan of the fine photograph of Baroness Sophie Mannerheim, here reproduced, I have to thank Mr. and Mrs. Ossian Donner.

T. B.

LONDON,
April, 1940.

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CHAPTER I

THE MANNERHEIM FAMILY. GUSTAF MANNERHEIM'S CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

BY a slight effort of imagination, it is not very difficult for us to picture to ourselves the world as it was in June 1867: though it is a very different scene from that which our civilization offers at the present day.

If we think of England at that time, all the leading characters of the mid-Victorian era pass before our vision: the Queen, widowed now for over five years, Mr. Disraeli leading for the Government in the House of Commons and carrying through the second Reform Bill, with Mr. Gladstone at the head of the Opposition. In France, the glittering pageant of the Second Empire was drawing to its close; though Paris had never worn a more glamorous aspect than in the Exhibition summer of 1867, when all the crowned heads of Europe flocked to gaze in admiration at the wonderful display set out in the Champ de Mars, and to applaud Hortense Schneider in the *Grande-Duchesse de Gerolstein*. Amid all this splendour and gaiety there suddenly resounded, from the other side of the Atlantic, the echo of the execution of Maximilian at Queretaro: while in the United States, President Johnson, Abraham Lincoln's successor, was struggling, as best he could, with the appalling difficulties which, two years after the defeat of the Secessionists, the southern states were still offering in abundance.

In Russia, the central and commanding figure of the vast empire was that of Czar Alexander II—the Liberator Czar, the most far-reaching measure of whose reign, the abolition of serfdom in Russia, lay but six years back. True, his repression of the Polish Rising in 1863-1864 had been unflinching

and marked by terrible cruelties : but at bottom, there remained in him to the last, sentiments tending, however inarticulately, towards the establishment of constitutional government. The best illustration of the uninterrupted presence of these tendencies in Alexander II is afforded by his treatment of Finland.

Finland which up to 1809 had, in the main, formed part of the Kingdom of Sweden, had, as a result of the war of 1808-1809, forced upon Sweden by Russia, become an autonomous part of the Russian Empire under the style of the Grand Duchy of Finland. The complicated political negotiations, which preceded the settlement of Finland's future status, were at first, on the Finnish side, mainly in the hands of a small delegation of elected representatives, known in history as the Finnish Deputation. The president of this delegation was a nobleman from western Finland, Baron Carl Erik Mannerheim, whose past career—he was about fifty then—had brought him into touch with politics, with military activities, and with the sphere of interest of the farming land-owner. The negotiations of the Finnish Deputation resulted in the summoning of the Diet of Finland—representative of the Four Estates of the Realm—which met in the little city of Borgå, in southern Finland, in March 1809. To this Diet the Czar of Russia, Alexander I, issued a solemn assurance, binding himself and his successors to respect and maintain the Constitution of Finland, her heritage from her association with Sweden ever since the Middle Ages. The Diet of Finland was never again summoned by Alexander I, nor did it ever meet under his successor, Nicholas I : but although this was an undoubted breach of the spirit of the Constitution of Finland, it did not offend against the letter of the law, since the summoning of the Diet was the prerogative of the Sovereign. Having succeeded his father in 1855, Alexander II a few years later gave back its life to the Finnish Constitution, which had lain dormant for over half a century : in 1863—thus the very year which saw the beginning of the ruthless putting down of the great Polish Rising—the Estates of the

Realm met again in the capital of Finland, Helsingfors, and were addressed by the Czar himself in a finely phrased speech—in French—which opened up the perspective of a constitutional regime from which, so far as Finland was concerned, Alexander II never swerved during the remainder of his long reign.

The second Finnish Diet of the reign of Alexander II met in January 1867, achieving in its work results of enormous importance for Finland. The political renaissance of the country was thus taking shape more and more definitely : and it was under these auspices, and amid the general historical setting here briefly sketched, that the man who will go to history as Field-Marshal Mannerheim—the great-grandson of the statesman of that name, mentioned a little while ago—was born, on June 4th, 1867.

The Mannerheim family, although for centuries associated with Scandinavia, is in its very origins of Dutch or possibly German descent : upon this point, the available data do not allow a definite conclusion. It emerges in Sweden about the middle of the seventeenth century with one Henrik Marhein, long an influential city father in the trading port of Gävle on the Baltic, but eventually, and until his death in 1667, devoting his energies, in Stockholm, to the first Bank that was opened in Sweden.

It was Augustin, the youngest of Henrik Marhein's sons, who assumed the name which has been borne by the family ever since : the change was made when, in 1693, Augustin Marhein was ennobled by Charles XI, King of Sweden, a revolutionary economist on the throne, less widely known than, but just as remarkable a personality as, his famous warrior son, Charles XII. Born in 1654, Augustin Mannerheim was, as a civil servant for a few short years, concerned with the carrying into effect of the vast financial schemes of Charles XI : but the greater part of his long life—he died in 1732—was taken up by economic activities on his own behalf, mainly through the channel of agriculture.

It is with the next generation—that of Augustin Mannerheim's three sons—that the career of arms first begins to assume importance in the family annals. It was embraced by all three ; and every one chose as his special weapon that of artillery. Of the brothers, it is the two younger ones that claim the greatest interest historically : Gustaf Henrik—the first in the family to bear the Christian name immortalized by the Field-Marshal of to-day ; and Johan Augustin, from whom all the branches of the Mannerheim family, now existing, descend.

Gustaf Henrik Mannerheim, born in 1695, distinguished himself through the efforts which he made to place Sweden in a state of military preparedness against Russia, in this anticipating the line of conduct followed in Finland nearly two centuries later by his great namesake and kinsman. Officers of the nobility were nothing if not politicians in mid-eighteenth-century Sweden ; and Gustaf Henrik Mannerheim became almost inevitably a frequent attendant in the House of Nobles, siding with the party of the 'Hats' which advocated an energetic policy against Russia. The quality of Gustaf Henrik Mannerheim's work in the army is, however, such as to free from any of the accusations of light-heartedness, which may justly be brought against many of the other leaders of the 'Hats.'

Johan Augustin Mannerheim, born in 1706, was gazetted sergeant of the Stockholm Artillery Corps in 1729 ; when his brother Gustaf Henrik, in connexion with the war with Russia, declared in 1741, raised an artillery battalion at his own expense, Johan Augustin was promoted to a captaincy in it. His subsequent military career culminated in his appointment to the important post of Military Governor of Gothenburg : from this he resigned in 1762, to devote himself exclusively to his mining and agricultural interests. Six years later, in 1768, he and his brother Gustaf Henrik were jointly raised to the rank of Baron—a not altogether unusual proceeding in the distribution of honours in Sweden at that time. His death occurred in 1778 : tradition in the family describes

him as a character of some austerity, but lays also stress on his 'enlightened mind'—a phrase of typical eighteenth-century ring.

Like his father, Johan Augustin Mannerheim had three sons: and it is in this generation that the contact between Finland and the Mannerheim family is first established. One of the brothers, Lars Augustin, played a part of the first importance in Swedish political life in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, being the moving spirit in a parliamentary clique known as the 'Mannerheim Club'; but it would take us too far to deal with his career at length in the present connexion. Attention is here claimed, in the first instance, by the youngest of the three brothers, Carl Erik Mannerheim, to whom passing reference has already been made and who was born in 1759.

At the age of fifteen, Carl Erik began his studies at Upsala University, with a view to a career in the Civil Service: but he soon changed his mind in favour of a career in the Army. Promotion came to him phenomenally quickly: and when in 1783 he was transferred to the infantry regiment of Åbo in Finland, he found himself a Major at the age of twenty-three. Soon enough the drama of war and high politics claimed him. Gustaf III of Sweden had in the summer of 1788 unconstitutionally declared war on Russia: the battleground was to be Finland. Discontent was rife among the officers of the army in the field: and matters came to a head after Sweden had suffered some military reverses at the inception of the campaign. On August 13th, 1788, over a hundred officers met at the manor of Anjala in southern Finland, and signed a document, demanding peace and observance of the Constitution. Carl Erik Mannerheim was one of the persons implicated in this famous 'confederation of Anjala': and after the King had extricated himself from a situation of appalling difficulty, eventually bringing the campaign to a more or less successful conclusion, the Anjala confederates were tried by court martial. A large number of death sentences were passed, but only one of them was carried out: in the majority of

cases a free pardon was given, and of this Carl Erik Mannerheim was one of the beneficiaries. A few years later in 1795, he resigned, however, his commission; shortly afterwards he bought the estate of Willnäs in south-western Finland—the county known as ‘Finland Proper’—and settled there: in 1796 he married a girl of seventeen, Vendla Sophia von Willebrand, daughter of the Governor of the Province of Åbo.¹ In every way Carl Erik Mannerheim was thus associating himself with Finland as distinct from Sweden: though, of course, to him as to every good patriot, the Kingdom of Sweden was one and indivisible.

The idyll of Carl Erik Mannerheim’s happy country existence at Willnäs was rudely shattered when, without a declaration of war and protesting her peaceful intentions to the last, Russia invaded Finland in February 1808. The campaign which ensued was not without glory for the defenders of Finland, and as sung by the national poet of Finland, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, serves to this day as the rallying-point for Finnish patriotic sentiment: but the south of Finland fell quickly enough to the invader, the city of Åbo—the then centre of Finnish administration—being occupied on March 22nd. Everywhere in the occupied territory, an unconditional oath of allegiance to the conqueror was exacted from the population: but at this period, Alexander I was still well disposed towards ideas of constitutionalism and had among his advisers persons who favoured such ideas. Finland, therefore, had a chance at this very moment: and a possibility of seizing it was offered when Alexander summoned Finland to send a deputation, composed of members of the four Estates of the Realm, to ‘inform him of the condition and needs of the country.’ As has been briefly set out before, Carl Erik Mannerheim, emerging out of his retirement, and having been elected one of the representatives of the nobility of the province of Åbo, accepted the presidency

¹ As a point of genealogical interest, it may here be mentioned, that Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, the present Prince Regent of Yugoslavia, is the great-great-grandson of a sister of Carl Erik Mannerheim’s wife.

of this 'Finnish Deputation' which proceeded to St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1808. The essential thing for the Finnish Deputation was to make the Russian Government realize, that only a Diet, properly elected under the existing Constitution, could be regarded as representing Finland and could settle the future system of government and administration in the country. In the delicate negotiations which were necessary to achieve this aim, Carl Erik Mannerheim took a leading part, though certainly helped by others: and he had the satisfaction of witnessing the adoption of the course for which he had pleaded. We need not here recount in detail the story of the Diet at Borgå in 1809: how the previous oaths of allegiance were brushed aside, how Alexander solemnly ratified the Finnish Constitution and how the Diet only then took the oath of allegiance to him. Carl Erik Mannerheim was, beyond question, the most prominent figure of the Diet; his contribution to the framing of various important Bills was a highly effective and constructive one; and when the personnel of the future Government of Finland was chosen, on the basis of a vote of the Diet, he was appointed to one of the principal posts, virtually corresponding to that of Home Secretary. In this capacity Carl Erik Mannerheim exercised a very fruitful activity until 1816, when he was appointed Governor of the Province of Åbo, at that time the most important province of Finland: but already in 1820 he was summoned back to membership of the Government, and two years later was appointed the first holder of the newly-created highest office, which was equivalent to that of Prime Minister of Finland. For some time he continued to enjoy the particular favour of Alexander I who in 1824 conferred upon him the dignity of Count, transmissible by primogeniture, the younger sons holding the rank of Baron. When in the same year General Zakrevski—a brutal, despotic bully—was appointed to the post of Governor-General of Finland, there began for Carl Erik Mannerheim a time of much trouble and difficulty: and Nicholas I, who succeeded Alexander I in 1825, felt very differently indeed from his predecessor towards

the ageing statesman. Carl Erik Mannerheim therefore tendered his resignation, which was granted in 1826 by the autocrat of all the Russias in anything but gracious and appreciative terms. He now retired for good to his beloved Willnäs, and died some eleven years later, in 1837.

It should be strongly emphasized that Carl Erik Mannerheim was one of the principal architects of the system of Government which obtained in Finland during the whole of the time of her association with Russia. He ushers in an entire era in Finnish history, his performance as a constructive politician being an anticipation of that, on an immensely larger scale no doubt, of his great-grandson a hundred years later, the heir of a family tradition of statesmanship created by Carl Erik Mannerheim.

With Carl Erik Mannerheim's eldest son, Carl Gustaf Mannerheim, a further important brushstroke is added to the complex picture offered by the family story. His whole bent was towards the pursuits of the scholar—more particularly towards the study of science: and he became in the end one of the leading entomologists of his age. And it is all the more remarkable that this should have come about seeing that he also remained faithful to the existing family tradition of public service.

Born on his father's newly acquired estate of Willnäs in 1797, he is the first Mannerheim to be associated with Finland ever since he came into the world: and it was at the University of Finland, at that time still at Åbo, that his academic studies were pursued. He chose the profession of the law, and when still quite young—thirty-four years of age—was appointed a judge of the Senior Court of Appeal of Finland, at Åbo. Before long the civic administration of his country claimed him: he became, in rapid succession, Governor, first of the province of Vasa, and subsequently of the province of Wiborg. Later again, when a Court of Appeal was established in the latter city, he was chosen for its first President, in 1839. The province of Wiborg, having been wrested by Russia from Sweden nearly a century earlier than the bulk of Finland, and

having experienced a gross misrule during that period, presented very thorny problems to the administration when, in 1812, it was reunited to the rest of the country. By general consent, Carl Gustaf Mannerheim dealt with these problems in a masterly fashion during the years which he spent in the ancient and picturesque fortress city close to the Russian border, dominated by a magnificent castle—coeval with the castles of Edward I in Wales—and curiously reminiscent, in its architectural ensemble, of the character of Bruges, with its pre-Reformation churches and ex-monasteries. Wiborg—the city martyred by Russian shells and bombs as these lines are being written—had for centuries been the last outpost of Scandinavian civilization: that the law of the West once again came to rule uncontested in these parts was in no small degree due to the activities of Carl Gustaf Mannerheim.

And yet—his heart was not in these activities: it was ever yearning back to his beloved insects, and whenever he could, he would snatch the time to pore over the ‘specimens’ which kept on accumulating in prodigious numbers in his cabinets. When but twenty-six he had published his first monograph on a subject of this character written in the flawless Latin of a perfect classical scholar: *Eucnemis insectorum genus*—a treatise of real value, even if eclipsed by his later contributions to the study of entomology. One notable group of them is formed by those dealing with the *Coleoptera* of Alaska—at that time still a possession of the Russian Empire: and these writings have long been familiar to American entomologists. It is indeed curious to reflect, that while the name of Mannerheim has only lately, thanks to Finland’s national hero, become internationally known to the world at large, it is a name with which by now generations of entomologists everywhere have been well acquainted. The abbreviation ‘Mann.’ for *Mannerheimii* is attached to the Latin names of ever so many species of insects, first identified by the Finnish judge and administrator. Countless specimens were submitted all the time to Carl Gustaf Mannerheim’s ‘expert eye’ from every part of the world: his correspondence, carried on in purest French,

with a host of fellow-entomologists outside Finland, was a most voluminous one. His collections, displayed with characteristic taste and neatness, are now the proud possession of Helsingfors University.

One further point is to be noted in connexion with Carl Gustaf Mannerheim. At a time when, as the inevitable result of historical conditions, Swedish was the language of the ruling class of the country, and the official language in Finland, he did much for raising the status of the Finnish language in the administration, the Law Courts, and at the University of Helsingfors.

On Carl Gustaf Mannerheim's death in 1854—during the Crimean War which was laying waste the coasts of Finland—he was succeeded as head of the family by his eldest son, Carl Robert, at that time an undergraduate of nineteen, at Helsingfors University. He was the typical young aristocratic intellectual of his time: handsome, romantic, passionately enamoured of the writings of poets such as Heinrich Heine and Alfred de Musset—indeed, apart from some poems in the style of the latter, he published anonymously a translation of the entire *Buch der Lieder*. In politics he belonged to the 'opposition,' which in the Finland of those days did not connote any very destructive radicalism: nevertheless, a mild political satire of his, produced at the theatre in Helsingfors in 1858, led to his being sent down for six months. A steadying element came into his life when, four years later, he married the charming Helena von Julin, daughter of one of the pioneers of Finnish industrial (notably mining) enterprise, Johan Jakob von Julin.¹ He now settled down at the family estate of Willnäs, where seven children—four sons and three daughters—were born to him in rapid succession, the youngest

¹ It should here be stressed that the *particule nobiliaire* 'von' which occurs in many Finnish (and Swedish) names must not be taken as always indicating German descent. By a somewhat strange convention it was freely added to the existing family name (even if these bore no resemblance to German) when a member was ennobled. Thus Johan Jakob von Julin was of purely Swedish-Finnish descent, his family name being simply 'Julin' when he was ennobled by Nicholas I in 1848.

in 1873. The activities of a gentleman-farmer on an estate of the importance of Willnäs were many and complex : but Carl Robert Mannerheim added to them by taking a practical interest in the industrial development of Finland. He thus in 1873 founded the pulp factory of Kuusankoski, one of the earliest in the country and still flourishing to-day, when the production of pulp has become one of the most important industries of Finland.

In 1881 Carl Robert Mannerheim lost his wife : he thereupon sold Willnäs to his sister and went abroad, restless and undertaking long journeys, but mostly living in Paris, where in 1883 he contracted a second marriage with Sophie Nordenstam, daughter of a former Prime Minister of Finland. It was not until years later that he returned to his native country, settling down in Helsingfors and engaging in business with considerable success. Though not a leading figure in political life, he seldom missed taking his seat in the House of Nobles in Helsingfors : and those who saw him there, even as late as the beginning of the twentieth century, carry with them an indelible impression of a head of strange, almost demoniac fascination, set on a figure slight and graceful to the last. He was not a frequent speaker in the House ; but his political *bons mots*, characterized by a biting sarcasm, were quoted all over Finland. And everywhere he was known, too, as Finland's finest gourmet : an invitation to one of his famous little dinner-parties was duly appreciated as a high culinary privilege, entirely apart from the Attic Salt with which the occasions were seasoned. He died during the first autumn of the World War—less than four years before his second son had won for Finland her independence.

The name of Willnäs has frequently been mentioned in the preceding pages, and now a few words must be said about this family seat of the Mannerheims, for so long the background of their whole existence. It lies on the Bay of Virmo, an inlet from the Baltic, just under twenty miles north-west of Åbo, as the crow flies. Originally the estate belonged to one of Sweden's most ancient aristocratic families, the Flemings,

being traced in their possession as far back as the fifteenth century. About the middle of the seventeenth century the house was rebuilt by one of the Flemings, assuming the architectural form which in its essentials it has retained until the present day: a simple, but imposing, granite cube, with three floors, and a steep, pyramidal roof with mansard windows. Its finely sculptured doorway admits you into the vaulted staircases; and the interior is lavishly decorated with wall and ceiling paintings, some of historical subjects, like those of the church hall, which represent the naval victories of the seventeenth-century Admiral Claës Fleming, others depicting part sceneries and other landscapes, and so on. Taken all in all, Willnäs is beyond question the finest country mansion in Finland: and the Mannerheim family always bestowed enormous care on the gardens and the well-wooded park, which is notable for an avenue which for years enjoyed the distinction of being the longest one in Finland. Needless to say, the house was held to be haunted: this referred more particularly to one of the most attractive bedrooms, known as the devil's room (*pirukammaren*, a word composed of Finnish and Swedish elements), and gruesome stories were told of the fate of the wife of one of the Flemings, who out of jealousy caused his unfortunate spouse to be walled up alive.

The first child of Carl Robert and Louise Mannerheim was a daughter, Sophie, who was born in 1863. Next followed, in 1865, the eldest son, Carl: to both of these, frequent reference will be made in the present volume. Carl Gustaf Emil, the second son, was born, as already mentioned, in 1867: his two first names were family names—indeed, all the sons had as their first name Carl, following a custom which was widespread in Sweden and Finland during the nineteenth century: the name Emil was, on the other hand, new to the Mannerheim family. The younger children were Carl Johan, Eva, Anna (who died as a child), and Carl August—two boys and two girls.

At this point we may pause for a moment to stress a fact



COUNT CARL ROBERT
MANNERHEIM

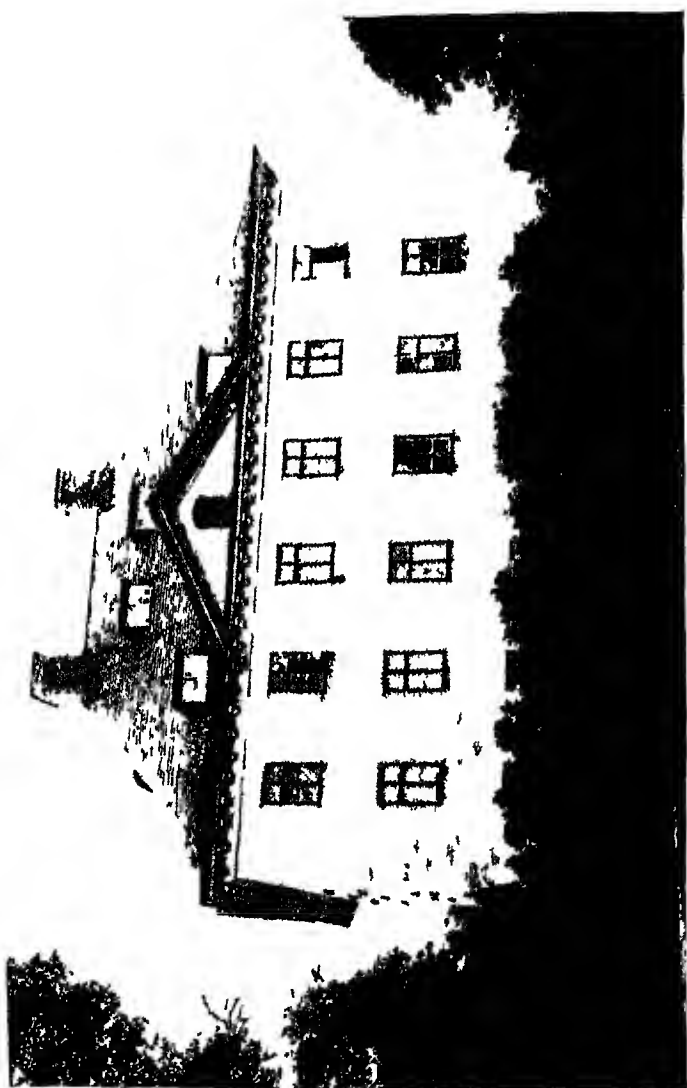


COUNTESS LOUISE
MANNERHEIM



THE SEVEN CHILDREN OF COUNT CARL
ROBERT MANNERHEIM AND COUNTESS
LOUISE MANNERHEIM

Gustaf Mannerheim on the extreme right



THE CHATEAU OF WILNAS

regarding the ancestry of this generation of the Mannerheims. It has often been suggested, and even asserted, that the ancestry in question is preponderantly German: whereas the '32 descents' of Carl Robert Mannerheim's children by his first wife show an overwhelming majority of Swedish and Finnish descents, with one solitary exception of a great-great-grandfather, traceable to Livonia. Since we are on this subject, it may perhaps be stated without incurring an accusation of pedantry, that Carl Robert Mannerheim's first wife had an English great-grandmother, Catherine Pellew, of the great naval family, whose eldest brother, Edward, is known to fame as the first Viscount Exmouth (1757-1833), by whom the Bey of Algiers was subdued in 1816.

The summer in which Gustaf Mannerheim was born has never been forgotten in Finland: for it ushered in the most terrible famine that Finland—tried hard and often enough in that respect—has known in modern times. The winter of 1867 was phenomenally slow in losing its grip on the country: in June the snow still lay deep and it was not until mid-summer that the trees suddenly burst into leaf. An icy summer was followed by the tragic night of September 4th, in which a severe frost destroyed more than half of the ripening harvest of Finland. The autumn and winter which followed were marked by scenes of Goyaesque horror, as the peasant population of northern Finland left their cottages, bare of food, and went trekking south in the freezing cold and wet of the vast, inhospitable forestland. Many died on the roads from sheer hunger and exhaustion; and soon epidemics developed, which caused mortality to reach appalling figures. Anyone who grew up in late nineteenth-century Finland carries with him the tales of that year of death and devastation: and an imaginative historian might see in this nation-wide visitation a foreboding of the catastrophies of a different nature which, twice in Gustaf Mannerheim's life, were yet to overtake his country.

The following year brought an exceptionally lovely summer; relief work on a large scale successfully dealt with the situation;

and so the wounds inflicted by those long months of horror gradually began to heal. The remaining twelve years or so of Alexander II's reign were, indeed, among the happiest periods in Finland's history, witnessing a steady progress and a truly remarkable development in many directions. They provide the harmonious setting for the story of the life of the Mannerheim children. It is the story of ever so many a nineteenth-century childhood in Finland, spent in close and invigorating contact with nature, Spartan enough in many ways, and marked by a spirit of venturesomeness, which must have kept the respective Guardian Angels excessively hard-worked. Among the Willnäs children, no one was more daring and reckless than Gustaf: his nickname in the family was, indeed, *wildbocken*, meaning the wild buck, and tradition has recorded a *cri du cœur* of his mother's: "I am not worrying about any of the other children: but what in the world is to become of Gustaf?"

Gustaf Mannerheim's younger sister Eva, now Countess Louis Sparre, has told some stories of her brother's childhood, which draw a singularly vivid and charming picture of the boy. Once, for example, when he was but seven and had just been sent to a preparatory school in Helsingfors, a winter's day finds him, as the leader of his form, resisting the onslaught of the older boys in the school playgrounds, and by a heavy bombardment with snowballs driving his adversaries out into the street. In doing so he does not notice a quickly approaching horse-drawn sleigh: and the next instant he has disappeared under the hoofs of the horses. A second later, the onlookers, with their hearts in their mouths, see a little fellow all powdered over with snow, rise to his feet unperturbed, and fling at the enemy his last snowball, securely held until that moment in an iron grip, to a defiant cry of victory: "Take that." And as the witnesses of the scene ask excited questions, there comes the nonchalant answer:

"My name is Mannerheim, and I am the general of the lower form."

His sister adds, that when the story of this exploit reached those of the family who had continued to live at Willnäs, opinion was divided as to where the greater admiration was due—to the youthful general or to those intelligent horses who knew how to avoid hurting little boys whom they ran over.

One day at Willnäs an episode which made an even greater impression occurred.

All the children of the house had been sea-bathing, unaccompanied by an older person, both parents being away. On the way home, Gustaf and Johan lagged behind, indulging in bilberrying and, moreover, intent on investigating the cowshed, a large building over which a new roof was being built. Only the large cross-beams were yet in position: and Gustaf, having climbed up to them, proceeded to take jumps from one to the next, until he, encouraged by his success, decided to try a flying leap, leaving out one intervening beam. The next moment he crashed to the floor below, nearly impaled on one of the pointed beams which were lying there in a heap. First-aid was rendered to the stunned and bleeding Gustaf by his little brother: the eldest sister, Sophie, responsible for the other children in her mother's absence, and alarmed by the delay of the two brothers in turning up, soon appeared on the scene. The casualty, supported by his sister and brother, bravely walked all the way home, where an attack of violent sickness ensued, quickly diagnosed by the children and servants as a hæmorrhage: and the immediate demise of the unfortunate Gustaf was taken for granted. Before long, however, the symptoms were traced back to their true cause—an excess of bilberrying: but, nevertheless, a long period of rest and convalescence was necessary before the victim of this terrifying mishap was able to resume his place among his brothers and sisters. And as long as there were Mannerheims at Willnäs, the calendar henceforth dated an event 'before' or 'after' the time when Gustaf crashed from the cross-beams.

Anecdotes of this kind could be multiplied: they have

obvious value and interest in bearing out the old adage that the child is the father to the man.

All accounts of the life of the Mannerheim children are unanimous in showing at once the rivalry and the deep affection which existed between Gustaf Mannerheim and his elder brother Carl: as a figure in history, the latter has inevitably been eclipsed by Gustaf, but the part he played in Finnish political life—different though it be from that of his younger brother—is one which the close student of men and events will never underestimate. And quite early in the life of Gustaf Mannerheim there emerges the figure of his elder sister Sophie, whose care and concern for him were to remain permanent features in their relationship.

The years of a happy childhood thus went by, until in 1881, when Gustaf Mannerheim was in his fourteenth year, the note of tragedy came in. As has been mentioned before, it was this year which saw his mother's death—an event which occurred quite unexpectedly and left the family stunned: it will be remembered that, in consequence, Carl Robert Mannerheim sold Willnäs to his sister. The family, indeed, now scattered, Gustaf and Johan going to live for a while with the widow of their maternal grandfather of his second marriage. A few weeks after Countess Mannerheim's death, public opinion was deeply stirred and shocked in Finland by the murder of Alexander II, stalked for years by the Russian Nihilists, but beloved in Finland, as no Russian Czar before or after: his statue stands to this day in the chief square of the capital, unmolested save for some unsuccessful attempts at vandalism by the revolutionaries of the Russian army and navy in 1917.

A momentous decision had by this time been taken as regards the future of Gustaf Mannerheim: it had been settled that he was to follow the career of arms. The normal procedure followed by a Finnish boy in such cases was to enter the only establishment for military education which existed in the country—the Corps of Cadets in the idyllic little city of Fredrikshamn on the Gulf of Finland, not far

from Wiborg. Accordingly, Gustaf Mannerheim, after a period of cramming, sat for his entrance examination, and was admitted to the Corps of Cadets in the autumn of 1881.

In Finnish military annals, a halo of indefinable glamour surrounds the Corps of Cadets in Fredrikshamn. It was an establishment whose ancestry went back to the Swedish era; and those qualified to speak describe its eighteenth-century founder, Samuel Möller, as a truly notable pioneer in the field of military education. Generation after generation of Finnish officers were fostered there, under exacting standards of efficiency and discipline. Those who gained their commissions were automatically transferred to service in Russia, where many of them remained all their life, rising to high rank in the Russian army; others were subsequently transferred to service with the Finnish army, which after 1878 consisted of one battalion of the Guards, nine battalions of Fusiliers, and one regiment of Dragoons—a Finnish artillery never existed during the era of the union with Russia. Finland was ever inordinately proud of her only school for officers, and during their holidays the young cadets, invariably wearing their becoming uniform, were fêted and made much of in a manner which to them marked an emphatic contrast to their Spartan mode of life during the rest of the year. As for their *esprit de corps*, it would be difficult to imagine a better one.

His fellow-students during the five years which Gustaf Mannerheim spent at the Corps of Cadets remember him as one whose personality from the very start asserted itself strongly, acquiring for him a marked ascendancy over his contemporaries. He was, indeed, openly acknowledged as their leading spirit, thus revealing already at this early stage characteristics which in ripened form have served him in good stead later in life.

In the summer of 1886 Gustaf Mannerheim left the Corps of Cadets and decided to sit for the decidedly stiff examination which had to be passed before matriculation at Helsingfors University. One must have lived in late nineteenth-century

Finland fully to realize the central position held by her only University in the entire civilized life of the country : to realize how admission to that University meant an almost essential hallmark of a useful citizen. To sit for the matriculation examination, though not a general practice for aspiring officers was therefore by no means something unexampled. Working with great assiduousness, Gustaf Mannerheim succeeded in a year's time in passing that examination ; and in the summer of 1887, at the age of twenty, he was faced with making a decision as to the next step to take. Service with the cavalry had a special appeal to him—not for nothing had the horses at Willnäs played a great part in the experiences of his childhood. In the Corps of Cadets at Fredrikshamn the study of Russian was an important part of the curriculum, and every alumnus arrived at any rate at a tolerable mastery of the tongue spoken by the majority of the Czar's subjects. Hence there existed for Gustaf Mannerheim no real language difficulty interfering with the possibility of studies in Russia. His decision was quickly reached : in the latter part of 1887 he joined the Nicolaevsky Cavalry School at St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER II

EARLY YEARS IN ST. PETERSBURG. FINLAND'S STRUGGLE FOR
HER CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

TO a Finn, the first arrival in St. Petersburg in the 'eighties of the last century was an experience not lightly forgotten. As soon as, leaving Wiborg behind him, his train had crossed the Russian frontier, it entered a land of desolate, almost uninhabited wastes and morasses, without any character, dreary, monotonous. Then suddenly there rose in the distance a vast city, towered over by noble domes and spires—that of the Admiralty, for example, familiar to all *habitues* of *Petrouchka*—the whole spaciouly set out on the banks of a great river, majestically sweeping towards the waters of the Gulf of Finland. German Rococo and Italian Classicism in many ways contributed to the character of the scene: but there was plentiful evidence of an Oriental atmosphere as well in bizarre architectural silhouettes, in the variegated colours which predominated in the buildings, in the melodious chimes of the countless church bells, in the very aroma of the air. The rhythm of the crowded streets was leisurely, except for the speed of the horse-drawn carriages: and everywhere, military and other uniforms added their vivid touches to the picture. The impression of boundless luxury and magnificence prevailed even if drab mediocrity never was very far: and the sense of a great Imperial metropolis—however scenically contrived—undoubtedly was there. And certainly, to a Finn, at the impressionable age of Gustaf Mannerheim in 1887, the whole was very strange, very wonderful: opening up, too, boundless fields for his ambition.

The Nicolaevsky Cavalry School, where, as already mentioned, he now continued his studies, was one of the most renowned institutions for military education in Russia, drawing its pupils largely from the ranks of the highest aristocracy. Socially, the young Finnish nobleman had no cause for feeling himself at any time an inferior among his fellow-students: but a purely Russian *milieu* was, of course, something entirely unfamiliar to him. Nevertheless, the charm and distinction of his manner, coupled with his innate true manliness, soon overcame all handicaps and won for him affection and regard in equal degree. He could, no doubt, be the gayest of the gay—and budding Russian officers would particularly appreciate that; but the quality of leadership, with which we are already familiar, was never dormant in him. With it went an inability to suffer fools gladly, a gift of, at times, biting sarcasm: but there was sympathetic understanding, too, and a capacity for making friends and retaining friendships made.

After two years, Gustaf Mannerheim had gained his epaulettes and was in 1889 gazetted as ensign in the 15th Alexandrinsky Regiment of Dragoons. Soon afterwards he was then transferred to the crack cavalry regiment of Russia—the Chevalier Gardes of the Empress Marie Feodorovna—the Danish-born consort of the reigning Czar, Alexander III, Queen Alexandra's sister: in history remembered as the Czarina who was ever Finland's faithful friend and protectress. In their truly Ruritanian uniforms, the officers of the Chevalier Gardes were protagonists in the glittering pageant of the Russian Court: but no one among them ever cut a more dashing figure in his day than young Gustaf Mannerheim. Wherever the tall and slender Finn moved, in his resplendent panoply, eagle-crowned casque and all, every eye followed him: his nickname at Court was 'The Knight.'

Before long an important event occurred in Gustaf Mannerheim's life: he married—in 1892—Mademoiselle Anastasie Arapov, of a well-known Moscow family, daughter of Nicholas Arapov, General *à la suite* of the Czar. To this



THE CORPS OF CADETS IN FREDRIKSHAMN



CARL MANNERHEIM AND GUSTAF MANNERHEIM
The latter in Cadet's uniform.



GUSTAF MANNIRIHIM AS ENSIGN OF FIFTH
CHEVALIER GUARDS

marriage, two daughters were born in rapid succession, Anastasie and Sophie; and the younger has once drawn a charming vignette of the domesticity of the brilliant soldier, in the large house of the Mannerheims on the Neva, sending for the children every evening, appearing to them as a vision of martial beauty, but so Spartan, oh! so Spartan in his directions to the nurses. . . . The traditions of the Willnäs childhood had never ceased to be alive in him, and to these had been superadded the principles of the military disciplinarian.

When these fireside idylls were taking place, there had occurred many events of far-reaching importance, to which it is now necessary to refer. The late autumn of 1894 witnessed the death of Alexander III—a giant in stature, in politics a confirmed, narrow, but honest reactionary—somehow already in his lifetime surrounded by a patriarchal aura, though he was less than fifty when he died. The throne of all the Russias was now ascended by Nicholas II, the tragic Czar: and once again the time-honoured, incomparable ceremonial of a Coronation was enacted in the Holy City of Moscow. The striking appearance of Gustaf Mannerheim had more than once caused him to be cast for important ceremonial parts at Court: and now we find him chosen as one of the two lieutenants of the Chevalier Gardes, who, sword in hand, were to walk before the Czar in the Coronation procession. A pictorial record of exceptional historical interest is a photograph of that procession, in which Gustaf Mannerheim is clearly seen walking a few paces ahead of the Czar whose story was to reach its terrifying dénouement, twenty-three years later, at Ekaterinburg.

The early years of Nicholas II's reign went by comparatively uneventfully: though it will be remembered that in 1898 the Czar issued an invitation to the whole world, henceforth to settle all international differences by peaceable means—an initiative which led to the establishment of The Hague Tribunal. In Gustaf Mannerheim's personal life these, too, were years marked by no startling developments, taken up as

they were with the routine of his military duties. His promotion to the rank of Staff Captain came in 1899—a year fraught with destiny for his native country.

The greater part of the reign of Alexander III had to Finland meant a period of maintenance, and indeed development of her constitutional liberties. It was not until the last few years of his life that the Czar, yielding to Pan-Slavist and imperialist tendencies, gave his consent to certain encroachments on Finland sworn rights: but to the end, Alexander III retained a sincere regard for Finland, where he and the Czarina, accompanied by their family, used to resort for happy holidays, relieved from all fears of Nihilist plots, and receiving on the contrary touching evidence of the loyalty of the population.

Nicholas II, on his accession to the throne of Russia in 1894, solemnly confirmed the Finnish Constitution—an act which, precisely on account of the anti-constitutional tendencies of the last years of the reign of Alexander III, created for the young Czar an immense fund of goodwill in Finland. But Finland's enemies in Russia did not rest: and by 1898 the schemes for the Russification of Finland were maturing. Nicholas II's consent to this was secured; the tool for carrying them into effect was found in General Bobrikov, a character of repulsive brutality, but pursuing his aims with great energy and ability. General Bobrikov was appointed Governor-General of Finland in July 1898; and almost simultaneously, a special session of the Finnish Diet was convoked for January 1899, in order to consider a new Conscription Bill, which sought to identify the military organization of Finland with that of Russia. The real blow did not, however, fall until February 15th, 1899, when the Czar issued a manifesto suppressing vital parts of the Finnish Constitution. This one-sided act amounted, of course, to a complete *coup d'état*; and Finland, monarchically minded and loyal, was absolutely stunned. Now ever since Finland's participation in the Scandinavian system of Government,

there existed in the country the tradition of 'going to see the King' in moments of grave crisis; and this traditional procedure was put into effect in a remarkable fashion. Within a month, in a country in the full grip of winter, a monster address to the Sovereign was prepared and subscribed by over half a million people, nearly five hundred delegates were elected, representing all the Communes of Finland, and then proceeded to St. Petersburg to lay the anxieties of the country before the Czar. The delegates were, however, not received; they had to return to Finland without having achieved that personal contact with the Sovereign which, relying upon ancient Scandinavian usage, they had pathetically endeavoured to establish. The Russification of Finland, the Czar decided, was to be carried out with ever-increasing energy and thoroughness.

Against this, Finland now organized the system of defence, for which the term 'passive resistance' has become the accepted description. It was a heroic, essentially idealistic method of upholding the cause of Finland: avoiding any of the devices of armed rebellion, refusing connivance at illegal acts, and facing calmly and resolutely the various punitive measures—dismissals, fines, imprisonment, exile—which General Bobrikov and his satellites were inflicting upon the law-abiding population.

The episode of the 'passive resistance' forms one of the noblest pages in Finland's history; and among those who helped to organize it, a leading part was taken by Gustaf Mannerheim's elder brother, Carl Mannerheim. Having first qualified as a barrister, Carl Mannerheim had subsequently chosen a career of business and joined one of Finland's greatest banking-houses. In the hour of his country's need he followed, however, her call immediately, and threw himself heart and soul into the unarmed struggle for Finland's constitutional rights. Good-looking, urbane, sagacious, and untiring as a fighter, Carl Mannerheim was an asset of incalculable value to the constitutional cause of Finland.

It would be out of place, in the present connexion, to give

a full account of that period of the constitutional struggle in Finland which lasted from 1899 until the autumn of 1905 : only a few salient facts must be recorded, so as to provide a background against which the personality and achievement of Gustaf Mannerheim may be properly seen.

A conflict of far-reaching importance was the one which arose over the question of Conscription. The Diet of 1899 went very far indeed in meeting the point of view of the Russian Government as regards this matter : and Finland had the satisfaction of seeing that the majority of the Council of Empire, which during the autocratic regime in Russia possessed important advisory functions, recommended the adoption of the Conscription Bill as amended by the Finnish Diet. The Czar and his entourage willed it, however, otherwise : the Bill was promulgated practically in the form in which it had first been submitted to the Diet, and simultaneously, all the conscript battalions in Finland were disbanded. This was in the summer of 1901 : and the first illegal levying of troops was proclaimed for the spring of the next year. The sequel brings out in a remarkable fashion the efficiency with which the passive resistance had been organized throughout the country : for 60 per cent of the conscripts never presented themselves for registration by the military authorities. Severe punitive measures were decreed by the Czar : but on the two further occasions when an attempt was made to carry out the unconstitutional Conscription Act of 1901—in 1903 and 1904—the machinery still proved unworkable. That was the last that Finland ever heard of the Conscription Act of 1901. The Corps of Cadets in Fredrikshamn, where Gustaf Mannerheim had received his first military training, was also swept away in the general débacle. Of the whole Finnish army, there now only survived the one solitary battalion of Finnish Guards, stationed at Helsingfors, and consisting of professional soldiers.

In all departments of Finnish life, Russian oppression made itself felt with increasing intensity. A rigid system of censorship was imposed upon the Press, and a large number of

newspapers were suppressed altogether. Russian was decreed to be the official language of the higher administrative offices : law-abiding judges, and other officials who refused to acknowledge the validity of the unconstitutional decrees, were summarily dismissed. A widespread network of espionage and police supervision ensnared the country in its meshes ; and in flagrant violation of the clear enactments of Finnish law, Russians were appointed to important administrative posts throughout Finland. One day in the spring of 1902, when the fiasco of the attempted military levy was becoming patent to the world, the Russian Governor at Helsingfors ordered a troop of Russian Cossacks to attack the peaceful citizens in the streets, using their whips and swords with barbarous cruelty on defenceless and unoffending men and women.

But passive resistance was not broken : a secret organization, controlling it, and issuing its directions to all citizens, existed at Helsingfors. When Russian oppression first began, opposition was instinctive and its organization more or less improvised. But as General Bobrikov improved the effectiveness of the Government machine aiming at the destruction of Finland, the necessity for a more closely organized system of defence became evident. A central committee, taking charge of the direction of passive resistance, was formally constituted at Helsingfors in September 1902 : and at its first meeting the chair was taken by Carl Mannerheim. A simple return to constitutional methods and the general political *status quo* was the avowed aim of the organization thus established ; but among some of its members, the idea of an independent Finland was beginning to take shape, in face of the ever-increasing evidence of Russia's political aims in Finland. Of that little group, Carl Mannerheim was also one.

Unable to reduce the law-abiding opposition of Finland, General Bobrikov finally applied to the Czar to be invested with full dictatorial powers. These were granted to him on April 9th, 1903, and included the power to expel Finnish

subjects from Finnish territory—an even then unheard-of violation of Finnish law. General Bobrikov lost no time in making use of his newly acquired powers : within a fortnight, six members of different political parties in Finland were notified that they were to proceed forthwith abroad, failing which they would be forcibly removed to Russia (which in official parlance meant Siberia). Carl Mannerheim was one of the six thus selected by General Bobrikov's vindictiveness : and the day when Finland's first political exiles left Helsingfors by the train bound for Sweden will never be forgotten by a witness of the scene of departure. It was a cold, if sunny spring day, and Helsingfors station was crowded with people—friends and sympathizers—who had come to bid farewell to those brave men who were now being banished from their country for the crime of having stood up for her laws. In the midst of deathly silence the train began slowly to move : the little group of exiles had gathered on the back landing of the last carriage, visible to all, Carl Mannerheim, still youthful, gentle, intensely spiritualized, standing next to his wife, whose dark tragic beauty was in singular harmony with the mood of the moment. The crowd swept down from the platform to the permanent way and walked after the train : but still the silence persisted, scarcely broken by an isolated shout of defiant encouragement. It was as if the enormity of the outrage had struck a whole people dumb.

A historian has recalled how, writing in a news-sheet secretly circulating at the time, one of Finland's leading political journalists prophetically penned these words :

‘The day will come when Czardom collapses : and then Finland will say to the “Czar of Peace” : There was a country, in the shelter of whose laws you might have found refuge. Now our people no longer owes you anything. Go, meet your judgment alone.’

Everyone knows, at this time of day, where and how he did meet it.

Meanwhile the tyranny of General Bobrikov ran riot in Finland: and with the advent of 1904 the future of the country looked black indeed. Then, with dramatic suddenness there came a ray of hope: 'and all men's hearts were lifted up.' Pursuing a reckless policy of adventure and expansion, the Russian Government challenged the legitimate interests of Japan: and in February 1904, Japan struck back. Warlike complications abroad were ever known to entail changes in Russian home affairs: so both in Russia itself, and in all her dependencies, high hopes of sorely needed reforms were centred on the gigantic struggle then beginning in the Far East. How all Finland—once so profoundly loyal—now rejoiced at the first, swift coups at sea by the Japanese navy; and later on, in May, at the victorious forcing of the passage of the Yalu River, when Russia's proud army was so thoroughly defeated by the 'yellow monkeys.'

However heartening the political omens of the day, General Bobrikov still remained there, with his iron grip on Finland. But his days were numbered: and the story of the assassination of Finland's arch-oppressor is, in all its implications, one of the most illuminating episodes of this chapter of political history. It brings in as protagonist the character of Eugène Schauman, a young civil servant of flaming patriotism, belonging to one of Finland's ancient noble families, the descendant of many generations of fearless warriors. The idea of some day championing the cause of Finland by force of arms was one which had a strong appeal for him: and as the only possible preliminary measure, he did what he could to promote shooting competitions among the civilian population. But it would be an entire mistake to regard him as anything like a hot-headed revolutionary: on the contrary, he was the typical, hardworking civil servant, of the most frugal habits, punctilious to a degree in the performance of his official duties. A slight, but steadily increasing deafness tended to make him something of a recluse: and in his solitude he gradually developed the firm conviction that the

situation demanded the assassination of General Bobrikov, the man through whom Russia's effort to destroy Finland was being carried out. He therefore decided to perform that act himself: but in order not to implicate anyone else, took the most elaborate precautions: destroying, for example, all letters that reached him, and for months cutting such of his friends as he happened to meet in the streets of Helsingfors—rather to our annoyance at the time. Then, on June 16th, 1903, as General Bobrikov was ascending the staircase of the Senate House, in order to preside at a meeting of the Cabinet, Eugène Schauman fired at him three shots, to which the General a few hours later succumbed: meanwhile, Eugène Schauman had, by two well-directed bullets, put an end to his own life. In one of his pockets was found a petition addressed to the Czar, setting out the plight of Finland and indeed of the whole Russian Empire, and explaining why the desperate measure which he was going to carry out had become inevitable. The document is a singularly moving one: not least because it scrupulously observes the official formulæ, which the experienced civil servant knew were *de rigueur* in a petition addressed to the Czar. The whole of the drama of Finland's struggle at the time is here summed up—the loyalty of the official to his Sovereign, the patriot's intense concern for the sworn Constitution of Finland. The decision to take the law into his own hands is, however, as he stresses, his own, unaided one.

Weakened by its defeats in the war, and taken aback by the assassination of General Bobrikov—no new thing in Russia, but the first political murder in the history of Finland—the Russian Government now decided upon a more conciliatory policy in Finland. Prince Ivan Obolensky, an aristocrat with some conception of constructive statesmanship, was appointed to succeed the upstart bully Bobrikov; the Finnish Diet was once again summoned; and the exiled patriots were allowed to return to their native country—Carl Mannerheim settled, however, permanently abroad, eventually identifying himself with important Swedish banking interests; though his love

for Finland never left him, and he remained in closest touch with Finnish political life. This personality will crop up again at various points later in this narrative.

While adopting more gentle methods in Finland, the Russian Government yet were not making a definite break with the past; and discontent in the country was only superficially allayed. Matters came to a head when, after the inglorious end of the war with Japan, marked by the Peace of Portsmouth in September 1905, a revolutionary hurricane swept the whole of the Russian Empire. A general strike was declared in Russia at the end of October: and the movement quickly spread to Finland. At one moment the Czar actually decided to abdicate, but eventually changed his mind, and on October 30th signed the manifesto which introduced a kind of Constitution into Russia, including a parliament to be known as the Duma. In Finland, the general strike brought into play, for the first time in Finnish political life, the forces of the Socialist Party, which had gradually been gathering strength. Finland had, at the time when the general strike broke out, no native armed forces at all, the last remnant of the Finnish army, the battalion of Finnish Guards, having been disbanded by the Czar in the summer of 1905; but Russian troops were garrisoned in considerable numbers all over the country. The Socialist masses now proceeded hastily to organize an armed force which quickly became known under a name which was to have a considerable lease of life in Finland—the Red Guards. It would have been an easy matter for the Russian troops to put down the general strike in Finland: but here, as in Russia, the Government quickly lost control of the situation. A manifesto restoring Finland's constitutional liberties was signed by the Czar on November 4th; the Diet was also summoned for the purpose of carrying out a sweeping measure of parliamentary reform; and a Government was appointed, composed of men whose loyalty to the Finnish Constitution was beyond doubt—indeed, the Prime Minister, M. Leo Mechelin, had but recently been one of the exiles of the Bobrikov era. Every-

where in Finland, one looked forward to the future with new feelings of confidence.

It is now necessary to return to Gustaf Mannerheim whom we left at the stage of his military career marked by his promotion to the rank of 'Staff Captain'—a Russian cavalry rank between Lieutenant and Captain—in 1899. The next few years show him persevering in his professional endeavours, concentrating, as before, upon his interests as a cavalryman; and here it should be emphasized that even at the greatest heat of the conflict with Russia, public opinion in Finland never took exception to the fact that officers of Finnish birth embraced a military career in Russia. On the contrary, since the Russian Government always showed a preference for recruiting the holders of high administrative offices in Finland from the army, responsible Finnish opinion held it to be of the utmost importance that there should be available a supply of Finnish officers, whose service in the Russian army had not dulled their sense of loyalty to their native country.

Gustaf Mannerheim remained formally attached to the Chevalier Gardes until 1904; but already some years before—in 1901, a year which also saw his promotion to the rank of full Captain—he had been seconded for service at the Imperial Stables in St. Petersburg. His activities there offered him full scope for his personal idiosyncrasies; and the risks inseparable from his calling were always cheerfully taken by him as a matter of course. In this connexion a characteristic story is told of an episode which occurred during a journey abroad, undertaken for the purpose of buying some horses. One of them gave him a vicious kick, which shattered one of his knee-caps. The surgeon in attendance upon him took the view that he would in future always have a stiff knee: and only with difficulty yielded to the entreaties to put together the fragments of the bones of the knee-cap. In the result, however, with the aid of massage and physical exercises, the knee-cap healed completely—only to be shattered again a year or two later precisely for the same reasons! And once more

the same method of treatment was followed, and again successfully.

The next stage in Gustaf Mannerheim's early military career is a particularly interesting one: he was transferred, in 1908, to the school for cavalry officers in St. Petersburg, where he was appointed commander of the squadron known as the model squadron—the post being equal in rank to that of the commanding officer of a regiment. The head of the school was a man whose name in the Great War became a household word—General Brusilov—the brilliant commander on the south-western Russian front in 1915, whose great offensive halted the advance of the Austrians against Italy in the summer of that year. All accounts agree that the General (who, after the Revolution, long served the Bolsheviks) was an excellent chief of a school which did a very great deal to raise the efficiency of Russia's cavalry weapon; and Gustaf Mannerheim, a 'cavalry-minded' soldier if ever there was one, was here engaged upon truly congenial tasks. The conditions of service were decidedly strenuous; but this was no deterrent to Gustaf Mannerheim, and for relaxation there was plenty of opportunity for indulging in various forms of sport—polo, for instance, or hunting in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg. As a commanding officer, Gustaf Mannerheim was immensely popular: but woe to the one of his subordinates who proved guilty of anything like neglect or maltreatment of a horse. He very soon found out that the officer under whom he served was an inexorable martinet. And one of Gustaf Mannerheim's aides-de-camp has recorded with what appositeness and charm he at all times would dwell on the advantages which would automatically accrue to the cavalryman, predestining him to leadership from his wider horizon high up on horseback.

Our account of Gustaf Mannerheim's life has once again brought us to the threshold of the Russo-Japanese War, in which the future Field-Marshal was to receive his baptism of fire. Some indication has already been given of the angle under which Russian society generally envisaged this war:

how it was looked upon in wide circles as something that would hasten the fall of the existing autocratic regime. Defeats rather than victories were therefore welcomed; defeatism was indeed rampant even among the officers of the army : though naturally there were a number of exceptions.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Gustaf Mannerheim belonged to the latter category. It took some time before his application to be sent to the front was agreed to : but, having been promoted lieutenant-colonel of the 52nd Nieshinsky Regiment of Dragoons, he at length in the autumn of 1904 reached the theatre of war. He arrived there thus at a time when the Russian army had been heavily defeated in the battle of Liao-Yang, between August 26th and September 3rd, and in consequence had fallen back on its positions near Mukden. The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army was General Kuropatkin, a strategist of no particular distinction, who certainly did not add to his laurels during this campaign : in Finland he was particularly disliked as the chief instigator of the measure which led to the adoption of the Conscription Act of 1901 and to the destruction of the Finnish army. The Japanese troops were skilfully led by the veteran Marshal Oyama.

The peculiar conditions of warfare on this front led to long periods of lull in the fighting : it was during one such period, shortly after his arrival, that Gustaf Mannerheim obtained permission to study the methods of fighting then obtaining at the most advanced positions. His new, spick-and-span uniform attracted unwelcome attention, and a nervous commanding officer, suspecting a spy, had him arrested and sent for examination to the Divisional Staff, where his arrival in the circumstances caused immense merriment.

Having volunteered for a reconnaissance in December, he was under fire when Colonel Prince Toumanov, in command of two Caucasian mounted regiments, outflanked the left wing of the Japanese army and brought back important results of their observations. Shortly afterwards, Gustaf Mannerheim, with his regiment, took part in an operation of



THE CORONATION PROCESSION OF CZAR NICHOLAS II, 1896
Gustaf Vannerheim in front of the Car on the right



LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GUSTAF MANNERHEIM (ON EXTREME LEFT) WITH THREE OTHER OFFICERS ON THEIR WAY TO THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904



THE WORLD WAR: GUSTAF MANNERHEIM REVIEWS THE 12TH CAVALRY DIVISION, 1916

some consequence, as the two squadrons commanded by him again turned the flank of the Japanese army, and made a dash towards the railway line connecting Port Arthur and Mukden. The Russian Command aimed at the destruction of this strategically important railway: so an operation for that particular purpose was decided on, for which Gustaf Mannerheim again volunteered. He was, however, considered to be too high in rank to be placed in charge of an undertaking of this nature: so the task was assigned to someone else, who, in the end, never performed it. About the middle of January, 1905, there came an opportunity for Gustaf Mannerheim of distinguishing himself in an engagement of some real importance. This was the battle of Sandepu, when the Russian troops were led by a fellow-countryman of his, General Oscar Gripenberg, who had been victorious all along the line, when orders from the Commander-in-Chief prevented him from pressing home the advantages already won.

Meanwhile the naval fortress of Port Arthur, besieged by General Nogi for several months, had surrendered to the Japanese on January 2nd—a stunning blow to Russian prestige. Reinforced by the troops of the besieging army, thus set free, the main Japanese army under Marshal Oyama now proceeded to force an issue by attacking the Russian positions in the neighbourhood of Mukden in the second half of February. The battle which ensued, and lasted over a fortnight, was the most ambitious military operation of the whole war: Gustaf Mannerheim was actively engaged in it, commanding two squadrons of the Nieshinsky Dragoons, which operated in conjunction with the Siberian Army Corps of General Gemgross. He had, indeed, at the very beginning of this series of engagements, for bravery on the battle-field, been promoted Colonel on February 19th; and during a later phase, when carrying out a reconnaissance under intense fire, he had his horse shot under him. The battle of Mukden, though not really decisive, ended, however, with the retreat of the Russians: and this took place under conditions of

great difficulty. The second army, to which General Gern-gross' corps belonged, was particularly harassed, a movement which had been planned for the darkness of the night, eventually being executed in broad daylight, with the troops completely demoralized and breaking all bonds of discipline as a result of the withering gun-fire of the Japanese.

No operations of outstanding importance took place on land after the battle of Mukden: attention was riveted on the fleet of Admiral Rojestvensky which, after its notorious attack on the Hull fishing fleet off the Dogger Bank, was leisurely proceeding towards the waters of the Far East to try and retrieve the fortunes of Russia's. Regarding Gustaf Mannerheim's personal participation in the operations of the army during this period of suspense, it is on record that he was engaged in several reconnaissances of importance: notably one, which he undertook at the head of some native Chinese cavalry, and which lasted for days, taking him far behind the lines of the enemy.

The dénouement of the Rojestvensky adventure came with startling suddenness in May, when Russia's last fleet met its doom in the Straits of Tsushima. After this, it was only a question of desultory fighting on land, Japan being unable to follow up the great advantages which her victories had brought her. As has been mentioned before, peace was finally concluded in September, 1905, as a result of President Roosevelt's mediation. For the Empire of the Czars, the campaign had been a singularly inglorious one; but to Gustaf Mannerheim it had brought invaluable first-hand experience of actual conditions of fighting and the technique of modern warfare.

His return journey to Europe proved also quite an experience. It will be recalled that, as a result of the war, a revolutionary movement of unparalleled violence broke out in the Russian Empire: even the concessions contained in the Czar's October manifesto were insufficient to stem this movement completely: and in large parts of Russia, in Europe as well as in Asia, revolutionary riots and mob rule went on until the end of the year. Gustaf Mannerheim's

railway journey across Siberia and Russia was marked by many adventures and lasted thirty-one days : a curious anticipation of a journey, which, though not as long, was to take him through even worse revolutionary excesses little more than a decade later. It was not until the first days of January, 1906, that he found himself back again in St. Petersburg.

For many years Gustaf Mannerheim's visits to Finland had been of but brief duration, though he had never let the links with his native country and his family snap—he had hastened to Helsingfors, for example, to be with his own kith and kin when Carl Mannerheim was exiled by General Bobrikov : and all his 'connexions' could not then protect him from being suspiciously watched by that secret police which in Czarist Russia was everywhere on the alert. But the first half of 1906 was to see him spending many months in Helsingfors. Time had inevitably entailed many changes in the family circle of the early Willnäs days : gone were the mother and the youngest sister ; Carl was a successful banker in Stockholm ; Johan, too, had settled in Sweden, while August was about to take up work as an electrical engineer in Johannesburg. Eva, married to Count Louis Sparre, was spending this winter at Cannes. Permanencies in Helsingfors were by now really only the father, Carl Robert, and the eldest daughter, Sophie, who, after a course of training at St. Thomas's Hospital in London, had in 1904 been appointed Head Matron of the Surgical University Hospital at Helsingfors, where she virtually became the founder of the Finnish Nursing Service.

The reason which brought Gustaf Mannerheim to Helsingfors was an interesting one. It will be remembered that in November, 1905, the Czar had solemnly announced his intentions of reverting to a constitutional regime in Finland, and summoned a Diet to meet in December, 1905, principally for the purpose of completely remodelling the Finnish parliamentary institutions. This task the Diet carried out by the end of May, 1906, and the Reform Bill received the assent of the Czar on July 20th. From February until June

Gustaf Mannerheim, as representative of his family in the House of Nobles, took part in the deliberations of this historic Diet.

The Diet of Finland, as it had existed until then, was a direct heritage from the parliamentary institutions of Sweden, where, however, the four-chamber system had been abolished as far back as 1867. The four Estates of the Realm represented by these four chambers were the Nobility, the Clergy, the Burgesses of the Cities, and the Yeomanry. This system of parliamentary representation obviously was the reflection of a structure of society which had ceased to exist by 1906; but it must not be thought that Finland's four-chamber Diet did not maintain a high standard of parliamentary efficiency. The passing of this time-honoured institution with its fine tradition was witnessed by many with keenest regret: only it had become theoretically indefensible.

The industrial progress of Finland had brought into being a considerable class of working men and women, among whom the ideas of Socialism had obtained wide currency. It will be remembered that this new factor in Finnish political life came to the fore in the general strike, which led to the re-establishment of the Finnish Constitution: and, as a corollary, a wave of intensely democratic sentiment now swept the country.

The legislators stepped, as it were, straight out of the Middle Ages into the twentieth century: a single chamber succeeded the four chambers, the alternative of a two-chamber parliament not being even seriously considered, though it had proved its worth in a country like Sweden, historically so closely allied to Finland. The right to vote, and to be represented, was extended to both sexes, Finland being thus the first country to open the doors of parliamentary life to women. All census limitations were swept away: every man and woman above the age of twenty-four was entitled to vote. Moreover, a system of proportional representation was introduced, worked according to provinces, and not treating the whole country as one electoral college. The number of representatives was fixed at two hundred.

One of the results brought about by these sweeping changes in the parliamentary system was a drastic reduction of the political influence of the Swedish element in the country. This element which inevitably possessed the greatest political experience, had hitherto controlled the Chamber of the Nobility and the Chamber of Burgesses, while the Finnish element predominated in the two other Chambers. Henceforth the Swedish element could only expect the number of mandates, which corresponded to its numerical proportion to the entire population of Finland. This was about one-eighth at the time when the Reform Bill was passed, and has subsequently been considerably lowered.

The Socialist Party was, as already mentioned, entirely new to Finnish parliamentary life. There was much speculation as to the number of mandates that would fall to it in the new chamber: and public opinion was decidedly startled when in the first elections, in 1907, the Socialists proceeded to secure eighty seats, or two-fifths of the mandates in the entire chamber. Ever since, the Socialist Party has remained the most numerous political party in Finland; and the history of Finland during the next few decades has been essentially conditioned by this fact.

There is a touch of singular appositeness in the circumstance that Gustaf Mannerheim should have attended the sittings of the last of the four-chamber Diets which ushered in the ultra-democratic era in Finnish parliamentary life. Destiny had in store for him much more important functions as a state-builder; but it is right that he should also provide the living link with all that was best in the Finnish parliamentary institutions of the past.

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CHAPTER III

THE RIDE ACROSS ASIA

THE first half of 1906 had meant for Gustaf Mannerheim a period of comparative rest and relaxation, spent in that atmosphere of hopeful, constructive work for the future of Finland, which prevailed in Helsingfors during these months. He was now to face one of the most thrilling experiences of his life—a task which, both physically and intellectually, was arduous in the extreme, but which at the same time made a forcible appeal to him in a thousand ways—his great ride on horseback across Central Asia and China.

For many generations Russia had been keenly alive to the importance which Asia possessed for her, both from the political and the military point of view; and the recent Russo-Japanese War had served to lay fresh emphasis on numerous problems in this connexion. The Chief of the Russian General Staff, General Palityne, therefore conceived the idea of inviting Gustaf Mannerheim to undertake an expedition, which, starting from the frontier of Russian Turkestan, was to take him across the whole continent of Asia, terminating at Peking. He was in the course of this journey traversing largely uncharted lands, to collect as many data of military importance as possible; and he was also to act as a political observer, notably as regards those reforms of the internal administration of China which the Russo-Japanese War had entailed.

Gustaf Mannerheim accepted the invitation thus extended to him: but it is characteristic both of his energy and his width of horizon that he should not have limited himself to

the performance of the task which had been set him officially. The archaeological, ethnographical, and anthropological possibilities of the enterprise upon which he was embarking impressed him at the outset; and he therefore immediately got into touch with that group of scholars in Finland whose studies were directed precisely towards the exploration of those parts of Asia which he was about to visit. The animating spirit of those studies was Professor Otto Donner, the founder of a learned society—the Finno-Ougrian Society—specially designed to foster research in this field. In the result, Gustaf Mannerheim brought from Asia material of the utmost value for this particular branch of learning—notes, photographs, and actual specimens collected on the spot. It is impossible not to recognize, in the spirit in which this work was undertaken and the quality of the results achieved, a hereditary connexion with the activities of Gustaf Mannerheim's grandfather, the great entomologist.

The expedition, it was anticipated, would absorb—as it did—a period of two years; and in order to achieve a full measure of success, Gustaf Mannerheim made very careful preparations for it. Our principal authority for this chapter of his life is the Diary which he kept during his journey, sometimes under conditions of great difficulty—on horseback, in the miserable hovels in which the expedition would rest for the night, and so on. In its typewritten form, it makes an imposing pile of some nine hundred sheets; a large number of photographs admirably supplements the information thus given. It should further be added that the explorer himself prepared a long series of sketch maps, notably of itineraries, which cover a distance of over twelve hundred miles. A report on the expedition, drawn up, in Russian, by Gustaf Mannerheim for the Russian General Staff, was published as a confidential Government paper in 1909.

The final preparations for the enterprise had to be made in Russian 'Turkestan,' where Gustaf Mannerheim proceeded by rail and sea in July, 1906. It was at Samarkand that he interviewed the two Cossacks who had been chosen from

amongst forty volunteers belonging to the Second Ural Cossack Regiment : the two, as decreed by the Czar, were to accompany the expedition leader all the way as his personal attendants. Gustaf Mannerheim warned the men about the difficulties and the length of the undertaking, but they assured him that they would do their best and not give in. Fit they undoubtedly looked : but it is interesting to put on record that one of the Cossacks only held out for seven months, while the other did get nearly as far as Peking, when he, too, broke down and had to be sent home by rail.

Seen off at Samarkand by all the officers of the Cossack regiment and its military band, Gustaf Mannerheim on July 28th, 1906, took train for Andijan, where the railway ended. From here the course was set for the little town of Osh, still in Russia, where the outfit and the personnel of the expedition were completed : and the caravan then, on August 11th, proceeded towards its first important goal, the city of Kashgar, in the westernmost part of Chinese Turkestan, the vast province known as Sinkiang. During this stage of the expedition, Gustaf Mannerheim was accompanied by M. Paul Pelliot, the famous French archæologist and specialist on ancient China.

This first part of the long trek took the expedition through very desolate mountain scenery and over extremely difficult ground : with the result that, in spite of all the forethought expended, great hardships were suffered by the beasts of burden in mounting and descending the never-ending flights of steps in the inhospitable rocky gorges. After three very strenuous weeks, Kashgar was eventually reached : and in the chronicle of the expedition there now follows a period of some months during which its leader developed a tremendous activity in various fields, leaving Kashgar in a few weeks' time in order to explore the districts to the south-east of it, as far as Khotan, for about three months and returning to Kashgar at the beginning of January, 1907. A long letter which he wrote about this time to his friend and adviser in Helsingfors, Professor Otto Donner, draws a very vivid

picture both of his life and of the country which he had been exploring. He is everywhere on the look-out for archaeological and ethnographical finds, of which he is sending boxes full back to Helsingfors: questions of folklore claim his attention, for instance, as suggested by the tribe of the Abdalls, whose historical position among the Moslems, he thinks, presents analogies to that of the Jews in relation to the Christians. An obligation, entailed by tradition upon all members of the tribe, is to undertake a begging expedition every year. The fear that the days of this interesting and little-known tribe are numbered, as a result of the increase of mixed marriages, leads our explorer not only to note down as many data as possible concerning its past and present, but also to take a number of photographs and anthropological measurements; moreover, under considerable difficulties—for the Abdalls are very shy and uncommunicative—he acquires a number of manuscripts concerning their history and religious customs. Upon every point he shows himself alert, observant, critical, and when one remembers the tasks of strictly military investigation that he had to carry out all the time, under conditions far removed from comfort, one cannot but admire the extent and variety of his performance.

As yet, the actual problem of the ride across Asia had, however, not been tackled in earnest: and it was time to get on with it. The first important stage was the one which would bring the caravan to Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang: and this part of the journey took some weeks of strenuous travelling to negotiate. The route followed went first in the westward direction of the caravan road to Maralbashi: then sharp northwards, and again, after a hairpin bend, to Aksu, on the northern fringe of the Takla Makan desert and over-towered by the southern bastions of the Tien Shan mountains. At certain points during this part of the journey, Gustaf Mannerheim found time to undertake some archaeological excavations, on one occasion employing no fewer than forty men: the results, however, did not answer the expectations raised by the surface indications.

From Aksu, an appallingly difficult ride of sixteen days, undertaken at the end of March, brought the expedition almost due north, across the River Muzart and the Tien Shan Mountains, to Kulja. At one point early in the trek, heavy snowfalls greatly impeded progress, and there were moments when the travellers, unable to see further than 150 to 200 feet ahead of them, completely lost their way, wasting endless time, as they explored one after the other of the practically identical gorges, and then, having recognized their error, had to retrace their steps. At last, meeting a caravan of merchants with some thirty pack-horses, on their way south from Kulja, our travellers knew that they had struck the right road. An entry in the diary gives a pen-picture of the members of the caravan so fortunately encountered: 'They are not browned by the sun, but literally black, the skin of their faces reminding one of a pair of brown shoes, long worn and well taken care of; their expression one of profound seriousness and tiredness.' Half an hour's ride now brought the caravan to the summit of the Tupe Davan Pass: the snowfall had ceased, and a marvellous Alpine panorama met the eye, including a chain of magnificent mountains to the north, which the expedition was to start scaling the next day.

The sequel was also full of dangers and excitement. Their direction now took our travellers across a rolling surface of ice, broken in many places by deep crevasses: the arrangements for bridging these dangerous interruptions were of the most primitive nature, and the utmost care and caution were necessary in order to avoid catastrophes. If the horses proceeded calmly, all went well: but if they jumped ever so little, they would inevitably slip, and be caught in a crevasse. This did happen in the case of one of the horses of the caravan, and the combined efforts of six people were needed to rescue the animal, which fortunately proved to be none the worse for its unpleasant experience. The road was studded with the remains of horses, serving as a sinister reminder of the dangers surrounding the traveller: Gustaf Mannerheim notes that in the course of one day he counted over thirty dead

horses, some already reduced to skeletons ; and that his own horse, at first much frightened by them, ended by taking no notice of them. The ride on this particular day turned into a race against time, full of anxieties for the leader of the expedition, who had to reckon with the possibility that if the night would have to be spent on the glacier, his men, unable to find even a single log towards making a fire, ran a serious risk of being frozen to death. Fortunately, at long last, the descent can begin ; and hours after sunset there appear in the distance the lights of a primitive hostelry, bent over by the winter storms, 'so that its incline is steeper than that of the tower of Pisa.' The scene at the inn is weirdly picturesque, with groups of exhausted travellers, some of them naked, warming themselves by fires lit in the corners of the spacious if poorly built room. The air is full not only of smoke, but also of stories of travellers who have frozen to death : one old man arrives, having lost his wife and daughter in the piercing cold outside, and himself escaping with one hand frostbitten.

Not even difficulties, such as those here sketched, could daunt Gustaf Mannerheim's eagerness to provide archæological results : and before he reached Kulja he had again carried out some excavations, yielding a number of ceramic and other finds, which were duly despatched to Helsingfors.

From Kulja, the expedition first retraced its steps due south, and then turned east to find its way along the river Tekes and past Karashahr to Urumchi, in the heart of the Tien Shan Mountains. During this stage of the journey, Gustaf Mannerheim continued making archæological records, copying inscriptions and drawings of bucks scratched into the rocks, and noting other features of interest wherever he went. Thus, at one point overlooking the Tekes valley he found a group of about eighty stone cairns, of which the largest was over eighty paces in diameter, the whole evidently disposed in accordance with some prearranged system. Unfortunately, circumstances did not permit him here to undertake any excavations. Ruins, previously known, were visited

by him in the neighbourhood of Karashahr, and in this district he also copied a large number of inscriptions. The last part of the trek to Urumchi was a particularly difficult one, many of the caravan horses giving out from hunger, exhaustion, or illness.

At Urumchi (of which an elegantly drawn plan exists among Gustaf Mannerheim's notes) the expedition was able to rest and refit, notably making good the casualties suffered by its horses. A contact of some importance was here made by the leader of the expedition, namely with a member of the Chinese Imperial family, Prince Lan, who had been exiled to Urumchi on account of his complicity with the Boxer movement. Significant of the interests of this highly civilized Chinese, of exalted rank, was the gift which he made Gustaf Mannerheim—a copy of a stone memorial of the Tang period, existing in the neighbourhood of the city of Barkul, which our explorer was to visit shortly afterwards.

At the end of August, 1907, the expedition was ready to move on again. Its first goal was the city of Gu-ch'en, the northernmost point reached during the whole journey across Asia. The region contained many villages which had been laid waste during the rebellion of the Dungans about forty years earlier, and never been rebuilt: indeed, there were indications that many of the wall paintings in the ruined houses had been removed to feed the demand of collectors of Chinese antiquities in Europe and elsewhere. Proceeding southward, Gustaf Mannerheim had the interesting experience of staying at Turfan with the same person, who, years before, had been the host of his learned mentor in Helsingfors, Professor Otto Donner. The archæological harvest of the expedition in these parts is notable for several early manuscripts of great importance.

Continuing in a wide loop across the easternmost spur of the Tien Shan range, the caravan next reached Barkul and Hami, the latter hemmed in on the narrow, high table-land between two parallel chains of mountains. In this city, Gustaf Mannerheim met by chance a British archæologist,

who, well known already then, was later but to go on adding to his achievements and fame—Dr. (now Sir Aurel) Stein. This scholar, who had embarked upon his second Central Asian expedition in the same year as Gustaf Mannerheim on his ride across Asia, was on his way towards the north from the south-eastern parts of Sinkiang, and as it happens had only just made his most romantic discovery—that of the cache of paintings and manuscripts, more than a thousand years old, in a walled-up rock chapel in the ‘Caves of the Thousand Buddhas’ in Tunghwang. Nothing was, however, said at the time about this sensational discovery; so that when Gustaf Mannerheim, now continuing his journey south, a little later in the year himself visited Tunghwang from Ansi, he only saw and recorded what was more or less generally accessible.

Having returned to Ansi, the expedition for a while went along the ancient Imperial Highway of China, passing through Suchow and Kanchow. In the latter city, Gustaf Mannerheim, however, decided to branch off towards the south-west into the desert, when he explored the little-known tribes of Uighurs—the ‘Saro’ or yellow Uighurs, and the ‘Shera’ Uighurs. His researches concerning the customs and characteristics of these tribes, as well as their languages, were, as usual, carried out with great accuracy and acumen; after his return to Europe, he published a valuable paper, embodying the results of his investigations, in the *Journal de la Société finno-ougrienne*.

After this excursion, the expedition continued its progress in a south-easterly direction. A halt, productive of an important archæological record, was made in the city of Liangchow; and then at length, towards the end of January, 1908, the caravan reached Lanchow, the capital of the Chinese province of Kansu, on the upper course of the Yellow River. The relative civilization of this city of many hundred thousand inhabitants was not without its attraction for the leader of the expedition: his diary records the ‘sense of pleasure’ with which he ‘finally, after a journey of over a year and a

half, walked the muddy, enormous cobblestones of the streets of Lanchow.' Every honour and consideration was shown him, and the Viceroy of Kansu entertained him officially at a dinner given at the Temple of Tsuo-gung-pao at Lanchow. For a while he was kept so busy that his diary was neglected for a whole month: but not so the tasks which sprang from his official instructions or his various learned interests.

An interesting episode which occurred during Gustaf Mannerheim's stay in these parts was the visit which on March 27th and 28th he paid to the great Tibetan monastery of Labrang, lying high up among the Nan-Shan Mountains to the south-west of Lanchow. The monastery in question is regarded as the third in rank among the Buddhist monastic settlements, the number of its inmates being about three thousand. It certainly was at that time extremely difficult of access, and, as will be seen, Gustaf Mannerheim's experiences on visiting it were far from pleasant ones, though other visitors have fared even worse. We may instance a French explorer, Major d'Ollone, whose expedition to China, Tibet, and Mongolia was undertaken in the years 1906-1909: on proceeding to Labrang it was attacked by Tibetan cavalry, with the result that several of the French officers composing it were seriously wounded. And yet this was a case where the explorers were supplied with all necessary documents, and strongly escorted. Gustaf Mannerheim, on the other hand, had no papers except his passport from Peking: he decided to trust to luck and to his own diplomatic skill, having, during the past few months, learnt, as he well might feel, all that there was to be known as regards the handling of Asiatics.

The escort which had been given to the expedition consisted of Dungan soldiers, who were at the same time to serve as interpreters: they showed at the outset great cowardice, and only Gustaf Mannerheim's threat, if necessary to proceed without them, caused them, however reluctantly, to accompany the expedition. This carried with it a number of presents to the various ecclesiastical dignitaries, and a large

piece of silk which Gustaf Mannerheim caused to be cut up in narrow strips, etiquette demanding, on the occasion of these visits, the exchange of any number of silk scarves.

On arriving at the monastery, Gustaf Mannerheim asked to be allowed to call on the two senior lamas, in order to place before them his request for an audience of the Head Lama, Gegen, the incarnation of Buddha. Our explorer describes the manners of the two senior lamas as courteous and friendly in the extreme, in marked contrast to those of the other lamas whom he had first encountered at Labrang. Presents were exchanged—the blue silk scarves handed to the visitor proving worn and threadbare to a degree—and the master of the ceremonies or Timpan—an ‘elder’ of no more than about forty—also took charge of the presents for Gegen. After a long absence he returned, and expressed his regrets that his holiness would be unable to receive Gustaf Mannerheim owing to ill-health. This intelligence was conveyed with a dramatic expressiveness to which the rejected applicant pays the fullest tribute in his diary. Permission was, however, given to visit the temples during the next day, under the guidance of a lama specially deputed for the purpose: an escort was also to be provided, but only as far as the first night shelter, an arrangement which was singularly pointless, since the dangerous part of the journey only began after that distance had been covered. Having taken leave of the senior lamas, Gustaf Mannerheim in the evening was waited upon by two further lamas, who presented him with a large leather bag full of copper coins. On the visitor’s declaring that he could not possibly accept presents of money, the two monks expressed great astonishment, pointing out that such a present was equivalent to an invitation to a lavish repast; and following up the analogy suggested by them, the monks shortly afterwards returned, bringing with them a present of a large quantity of meat, which in the circumstances our explorer perforce had to accept.

The next day was to provide plenty of drama. It began quietly enough with the lama guide turning up, as arranged,

whereupon a stroll was made along the river. From here one approaches the three low galleries which enclose the main monastery buildings, and contain rows of large 'prayer mills' or rather 'prayer cylinders.' Countless pilgrims—mostly old men and women—move in these galleries, setting the cylinders in motion : and at certain intervals these activities are interrupted by a different ritual, as the pilgrims kneel or throw themselves, face forward and arms outstretched, headlong into the dust. A busy market takes place every morning on the bank of the river : the merchandise—which ranks from foodstuffs to Buddha effigies and other devotional objects—being transported to the spot by yaks, mounted by Tanguts—that is, Northern Tibetans—a race of very striking appearance. Our explorer notes how, more especially, the younger men look magnificent as they stand theatrically draped in their fur coats, edged with a broad, red band, and one sleeve trailing in the dust. The cap is pushed back on to one ear ; on the breast is worn a beautiful box in chiselled silver with corals and jewels, containing prayers and various medicaments ; from the ear hangs a silver ring set with corals ; into the sash a big sabre is tucked, and on the feet are top boots in red and green.

Animosity towards strangers is very obvious : no sooner is one's back turned on a group than loud laughter and hisses are heard, and all of a sudden, a stone flung from behind comes whistling past one's ear.

In conformity with the programme agreed upon, the party now proceeded to the inspection of the temples, of which there are close upon sixty within the precincts of the monastery. The diary of Gustaf Mannerheim contains detailed descriptions of four temples, noting their astounding contents of effigies and ornaments of every kind. By the time the fourth temple had been visited, it became, however, only too patent that the enmity of the natives was gathering strength : the hisses grew ever louder and the bombardment with stones increased in volume and intensity. The leader of the expedition now made up his mind quickly, deciding not to prolong

his visit to a place so abounding in hatred of strangers. The question was where to proceed next. The Dungan guide, who had been provided for the expedition from Lanchow, insisted that it was too dangerous to seek night quarters with some Tangut in the neighbourhood of Labrang, and suggested crossing the river, marching some miles, and spending the night in the house of a Chinese. This Gustaf Mannerheim would, however, not agree to: and so the Dungan was constrained to try to obtain admission to such houses as were closer at hand. It was a matter of climbing walls and knocking without result at locked doors. At long last the doors of one house were opened to the party: but the sight which met their eyes was truly terrifying: for on the threshold there stood a leper, with an aspect so sickening that our diarist confesses that, were it not for his obstinacy, he would have gone on to another village. The leper, however, agreed to spend the night in the open, and the party proceeded to commandeer a large cottage, occupied in addition by two cows and a horse. The leader of the expedition lay down on an empty bed: and when in the morning he got up, the leper also appeared, claiming his blankets. It was then discovered that it was the leper's bed which Gustaf Mannerheim had occupied for one whole night—fortunately, as it turned out, without any ill effects accruing to him.

After this alarming experience, the expedition proceeded on its way, encountering, for a while, considerable difficulties, since no Tanguts would come forward as guides in a district pronounced to be dangerous. Gradually, however, the plain was reached, and among the industrious Chinese agriculturists who inhabited it the risk of unpleasant incidents was considerably lessened.

The expedition to Labrang had put to the test all its leader's courage and resource. It was, however, a rare and fascinating experience to look back upon; and specialists emphasize that Gustaf Mannerheim's description in his diary of the four temples that he visited—descriptions based upon observations made in a very short space of time, and made

under difficulties with which the reader is acquainted—would most certainly deserve to be published in full. It is further to be noted that he managed to secure a large number of objects illustrative of Tibetan civilization—objects which up to that time, owing to the inaccessibility of Tibet, had but rarely found their way into public or private collections. Many of these highly decorative pieces adorn to-day the house of the Field-Marshal at Helsingfors.

But to return to 1908 : the next eastward stage of the expedition's progress took it across ancient Chinese lands of whose aspect and conditions, nearly thirty years later (1935), Miss Ella K. Maillard has given a vivid account in her book, *Forbidden Journey*. The route crossed the Wei-Ho River, then continued to far-famed cities like Sian, with its monumental tombs of the Han dynasty, and Loyang, with its wonderful Temple Caves replete with Buddhist sculptures. From Kai-fong, further to the east, the caravan retraced its steps for a brief distance, and then turned sharp north. Crossing the Wei-Ho once again, our travellers about mid-summer reached Tai-Yan, the capital of the province of Shansi. It was from Tai-Yan that Gustaf Mannerheim paid a visit which forms one of the most striking and memorable episodes of his entire journey. It will be recalled, that as a result of the British expedition to Lhasa in 1904, the Dalai Lama had fled to China, where he had sought refuge in the monastery of Utai Shan, near Tai-Yan. Here was, obviously, for Gustaf Mannerheim the possibility of an interesting contact to be added to the many with which his ride across Asia had provided him; and he was not slow to seize his chance. His diary once again supplies us with full and graphic details concerning the sequence of events.

On June 25th he called on one of the lamas most exalted in rank, now also staying at the monastery; indeed, the retinue of the Dalai Lama, at the time put up at Utai Shan, amounted to some three hundred people. Chinese and Tibetan sentries had to be passed in order to gain admission to the inner courts. All the buildings were much decayed,

the wooden galleries in particular suggesting that they were near collapse: everything was untidy and evil-smelling. Whilst waiting to be admitted to the lama upon whom he was calling, our visitor noticed that some saddled horses were being led down a flight of steps: and whispers running through the crowd heralded the advent of the Dalai Lama himself. Preceded by some Tibetans, who conveyed to our explorer by threatening gestures that photographing was forbidden, the Dalai Lama, entirely dressed in golden yellow, walked quickly down the steps. On noticing a stranger among the spectators, he stopped for a second: but, notes Gustaf Mannerheim, I was, alas! too decent to take a photograph of him against his wishes. Said to be about thirty, his looks did not belie this.

The next day, June 26th, brought the coveted privilege of the audience of the Dalai Lama. About two o'clock a Tibetan came running to Gustaf Mannerheim's room, telling him by means of gestures that his holiness was expecting him. As he was shaving and quickly changing into a better suit, another Tibetan rushed up breathless, signifying his or his master's impatience: our explorer was just as impatient, but could not possibly change more quickly. When he had nearly finished, yet a third visitor arrived—a Tibetan Prince whom Gustaf Mannerheim had met on previous occasions, and who asked him what he meant by keeping the Dalai Lama waiting. The two now ran to the monastery with all speed, the Tibetan having to stop twice and cool himself with his fan. At the monastery, a Chinese guard of honour was drawn up; a Chinese official, known to Gustaf Mannerheim, had also arrived in full uniform. He had hoped to be admitted on the same occasion to the august presence, and took it very badly when Gustaf Mannerheim informed him that only two persons were to be received—our explorer and his interpreter, the lama upon whom Gustaf Mannerheim had called the day before.

The audience chamber which Gustaf Mannerheim now entered had two of its walls hung with pictures executed in

strident colours on paper. The gilded arm-chair which served as the Dalai Lama's throne was placed on a dais covered with rugs in front of the back wall: his feet rested on a coarsely carved footstool, and on the right of him was a low, gilded, and richly carved chest. On each side of the throne, at the foot of the dais, stood two elderly bearded Tibetans, in brownish yellow dresses and wearing on their heads a round yellow Chinese ceremonial cap. Gustaf Mannerheim's interpreter was similarly dressed; he translated the visitor's words in a whisper, leaning deeply forward and without raising his eyes to his holiness.

The Dalai Lama, whose head was bare, wore a yellow silk dress with light blue cuffs, and was in addition draped in the customary red silk scarf of all lamas; on his feet were boots of Chinese shape, made of yellow felt with blue ribbons along the seams. A slight nod acknowledged the deep bow of the visitor: a light blue *batak* or silk scarf was presented to his holiness, who returned the compliment by handing Gustaf Mannerheim a beautiful white one. The Dalai Lama then began the conversation with a few formal questions. From what country did his visitor come? How old was he? Which route had he followed? Topics of a less conventional nature were then touched upon: his holiness spoke of having met the Russian Minister at Peking, M. Lessar, whom he valued, and on Gustaf Mannerheim's informing him that the diplomatist in question had died, he expressed eagerness to meet his successor. At this stage there was produced a lovely piece of white silk, woven with Tibetan lettering: and the visitor was asked to take this to the Emperor of Russia as a present from the Dalai Lama.

There now followed an unconventional episode. Among Gustaf Mannerheim's presents to the Dalai Lama was a Browning revolver: and his holiness was mightily amused—he laughed so that all his teeth could be seen—when his visitor explained to him how the weapon could be reloaded by the simultaneous insertion of seven cartridges. Gustaf Mannerheim apologized for not producing a better gift, but

after two years of travel it was difficult to have retained other things of value than weapons : and he added that the times were such that a revolver might be more useful, even to a holy man, than the most precious and sacred objects. All this went down very well. A delicate matter was then reached : would the Dalai Lama allow himself to be photographed ? Alas, he would not : he had often been asked to grant this favour, and always refused. However—next time the two met, he would consent : for now that he had received Gustaf Mannerheim he would always look upon him as an old friend. As it turned out, the Dalai Lama eventually did permit a photograph of him to be taken once, by the Russian General Kozlow : it is this unique photograph that one always sees reproduced in works of reference.

The subjects touched upon during the audience did not allow Gustaf Mannerheim to draw any very definite conclusions regarding the intellectual range of his august interlocutor. He received, however, the impression of a person in full possession of his mental and physical faculties, and, more especially, definitely critical and suspicious of China and the Chinese Government, upon whose hospitality he at the time was thrown back. Indeed, twice during the audience he gave orders to find out if a listener was hiding behind the curtain of the door. He looked a person far from resigned to playing the part assigned to him by the Chinese Government, suggesting on the contrary that he was only waiting for his chance to confuse his adversary.

At that time, it will be recalled, the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet had been recognized by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 : and in February, 1910, less than two years after the audience at Utai Shan, the Chinese occupied Lhasa, the Dalai Lama and his Minister now seeking a refuge in India, at Darjeeling. The revolution which occurred in China shortly afterwards gave, however, the Dalai Lama the chance he had been waiting for : in 1911 the Chinese were driven out of Tibet and the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, where he maintained himself until his death in 1933, securing indeed

right at the end of his reign valuable concessions of territory from China. It has been justly noted that this sequence of events provides an interesting commentary to the forecasts made by Gustaf Mannerheim in 1908 as a result of his brief interview with the Dalai Lama.

The visit to the Dalai Lama was the last notable episode which occurred during Gustaf Mannerheim's long trek across the yellow continent. A zig-zag course across north-eastern China brought him to his terminus at Peking. From there he paid a short visit to Japan, and then returned by the Trans-Siberian Railway to St. Petersburg, proceeding shortly afterwards to Helsingfors.

Gustaf Mannerheim was just thirty-nine when he set out on the ride, the successive stages of which have here been sketched. The distance covered may be estimated as close upon 8,500 miles; and taking moreover into account the difficulties which sprang from the character of the ground traversed, from the climate and from the absence of anything like comfort wherever rest was sought, this journey, both as a feat of horsemanship and endurance generally, deserves to rank very high indeed. And it is easy to realize how much an enterprise like this must have meant for the development of a man's character—of his powers of quick decision, when thrown back upon his own resources, alone in a strange and inhospitable land, of his power, too, of getting the maximum of performance out of his subordinates, whose absolute confidence in him was the necessary condition for success in hundreds of difficult situations.

But it must also be stressed how much an expedition such as this, undertaken in the spirit which Gustaf Mannerheim brought to it, must have done to widen his intellectual horizon. A recent visitor to Field-Marshal Mannerheim, in the snow-bound G.H.Q. of the Finnish army, has recorded his surprise at discovering the breadth of his host's interests, mentioning in particular his interest in the subject of races. Now here was a field of study which Gustaf Mannerheim cultivated with particular assiduousness during his ride across

Asia, collecting a huge quantity of anthropological data concerning a number of little-known native tribes; nor should it be forgotten—as a fellow-explorer has rightly emphasized—under what revolting conditions of dirt and in the face of what disinclination to submit to investigations all this work had to be carried out. Nor was that part of the study of which concerns itself with the general background of life neglected: as witness the countless photographs and collection of objects brought back by our explorer, apart from his copious descriptive notes. Little wonder, then, that the subject of races is one upon which Gustaf Mannerheim can speak with authority.

Training as a professional archaeologist, of course, he had none, and it is all the more remarkable how, guided by his flair and critical sense, he brought back collections of such great value and interest. In this connexion we may particularly instance his collections of ancient manuscripts and xylographic books. These have provided and still provide material of real importance to specialists: none more than a fragment of a manuscript written in a north-Asian language, which is thought to have been spoken in Central Asia about the time of the birth of Christ. Fragments of writing in this language are excessively rare, and the one which our explorer brought back has more than once been lent for study by specialists outside Finland at their request.

It will be seen, then, that as an experience, his ride through Asia has an importance for the evolution of Gustaf Mannerheim's personality, which it would be difficult to over-estimate. He himself took it, however, in his stride as it were, without any pedantry or pretence: and once back in his accustomed surroundings, faced his accustomed tasks as if nothing had happened.



GUSTAF MANNLRHUFIM RECEIVED BY CHINESE DIGNITARIES AT AKSU, 1907



THE CARAVAN READY TO START FOR KHOTAN, 1906



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM AS COMMANDER OF THE 13TH
VLADIMIR REGIMENT OF ULANS, 1909

CHAPTER IV

RUSSIAN OPPRESSION IN FINLAND. THE WORLD WAR THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

THE Russia of the five or six years which preceded the outbreak of the World War was undoubtedly travailed by deep-seated political antagonisms and a sense of impending catastrophe; but its exterior remained glittering enough, more especially in a city like St. Petersburg, where Gustaf Mannerheim spent the greater part of the period in question. His military career by now bore the hall-mark of brilliant success and brought him rapid advancement. Appointed in 1909, soon after his return from Asia, Commander of the 13th Vladimir Regiment of Ulans, he became already the next year Commander of the Regiment of Ulans of His Majesty's Life Guards. In 1911 he was promoted Major-General—this being generally regarded as a special recognition of his performance in crossing Asia and collecting the political and military information he had been sent out to secure. The next year he received his appointment as Major-General *à la suite* attached to the Czar—a token of his sovereign's particular appreciation of him. Moreover, as a first-rate shot, General Mannerheim was frequently honoured by invitations to the shooting-parties of the Czar, with whom he was on an excellent personal footing.

Several Jubilees, with accompanying celebrations of great pomp and circumstance, punctuated the years of which I am now speaking. In 1909 there was the Poltava Jubilee, in memory of the victory of Peter the Great over Charles XII in 1709. The year 1912 brought, for one thing, the great festivities in connexion with the unveiling of the monument

of Alexander III at Moscow—festivities which also were supposed to mark the reconciliation between the Czar and Russia's ancient capital, which ever since the revolutionary disorders of 1906 had remained in a kind of disgrace; and secondly, the centenary of the defeat of Napoleon's invading army. (And here I may perhaps mention that when some years later I gave Gustaf Mannerheim a copy of Mr. Hilaire Belloc's book on the 1812 campaign, the General, who knew that campaign in every detail, expressed to me a very high opinion of Mr. Belloc's interpretation of that chapter of military history.) In 1913, finally, the tercentenary of the accession of the House of Romanov was made the occasion of very elaborate celebrations in St. Petersburg—the last great rally round the throne of the Czar, before that throne was swept away. At all the more important of the functions which marked these celebrations, the tall, imposing figure of Gustaf Mannerheim would be seen as he took his appointed part in the Imperial pageant.

The advent of the fateful year 1914 brought him further promotion and an appointment away from St. Petersburg: for he now received his nomination as Chief of the Cavalry Brigade of Guards stationed at Warsaw; and he was at the same time appointed member of the War Council of the District of Warsaw. An appointment to a post in Warsaw could not but prove attractive to Gustaf Mannerheim who always had entertained feelings of warmest regard for the Poles; and though he came there as an officer in the army of Poland's chief oppressor, ties of sympathy and friendship between him and individual Poles soon developed and became numerous. Indeed, such ties had already been formed in previous years: and again his qualities as a shot had been of no small help in furthering personal relations, since the Polish aristocracy owned some of the finest shoots in Europe and he had been a welcome guest to many shooting-parties in Poland.

Meanwhile, the situation in Finland had, thanks to the senseless policy of the Russian Government, become exceed-

ingly grave. As we saw, a return to a constitutional regime in the Grand Duchy was effected in November, 1905; and it looked for a while as if Finland might enter upon an era of steady progress under the auspices of her sworn rights. However, after Count Witte in May, 1906, had resigned the office of Russian Prime Minister, ultra-nationalist and despotic tendencies again came to the fore in Russian Government circles: and in Peter Stolypin the Czar in the summer of 1906 appointed a Premier, in whom hatred of Finland eventually developed into an obsession. He bided his time for a while, but ominous symptoms were soon apparent. The Cabinet of Mechelin was got rid of by a cynical perversion of parliamentary usage; and in June, 1908, the Czar, under the influence of Stolypin, openly reverted to the precedent of the *coup d'état* of February, 1899. Nicholas II now enacted that any Bill or measure of administration which had a bearing on the interests of the Empire should be submitted to the Russian Council of Ministers. One-sided action, such as embodied in the Czar's Rescript, was unknown to the Finnish Constitution; and the terms of the Rescript were so vague and elastic that it could be used completely to nullify legislative or administrative action in Finland.

Reaction to this measure in Finland was immediate and unmistakable in its character; and the Diet, which had been first dissolved in April, 1908, was dissolved again in February, 1909: indeed, four dissolutions took place in rapid succession between 1908 and 1910. As its speaker, the Diet during this period always elected a member and Judge, Pehr Evind Svinhufvud—for the two positions were compatible with each other in Finnish law—whom Finland soon came to regard as the most fearless and outspoken champion of her constitutional rights: his speeches in reply to the speech from the throne, at the opening of the Diets, crystallized Finland's feelings of political consciousness, at the time, as no others; indeed, the Dissolution of the Diet in February, 1909, followed immediately upon the delivery of M. Svinhufvud's reply to the speech from the throne. It was shortly before this occurred

that Gustaf Mannerheim, during his visit to Helsingfors immediately after his return from Asia, had conferred with Finnish political leaders as to possibilities of influencing the Czar in favour of Finland during the audience that would be granted him for the purpose of reporting to the Sovereign on his expedition : but the Russian Government was not to be deflected.

The year 1909 brought, also, the resignation of the last Government of Finnish patriots during the rule of the Czars : a puppet cabinet of Russified Finns was appointed in its stead. And the end of the year, furthermore, saw the installation at Helsingfors, as Governor-General, of the hated General Seyn, a wholly despicable person, who had gained his spurs under General Bobrikov. Among the more notable Government measures in 1909 was also a Manifesto which for the time being released the Finns from military service, enacting that the country was to pay an annual indemnity to the Russian Imperial exchequer instead. No Finnish army could under any circumstances be tolerated, that was the watchword of the then rulers of Russia.

The Russification of the administration of Finland proceeded apace, and in the summer of 1910 a measure took shape which struck at the very root of Finland's autonomy. After the two first popularly elected Dumas had followed a line of uncompromising opposition to the Czar's Government and consistently expressed sympathy with Finland, Stolypin had, in the packed Third Duma which met in November, 1907, found a parliamentary assembly ready to give full support to his designs against Finland. A Bill known as the Imperial Legislation Bill was submitted to the Duma in June, 1910 : for one thing, it enacted that Finland was to elect representatives on the Duma, and the Council of Empire, by now the Second Chamber provided for the Russian ' Constitution ' ; and more important, it submitted to the decision of the Russian legislature all legislative measures adopted by the Finnish Diet, if held by the Russians to affect Imperial interests. Even in the Third Duma there was strong opposition to provisions

such as these ; but the Bill was nevertheless forced through, and its ultimate aim was brought out in a flash by the jubilant exclamation of one of the worst Finland-haters in the Duma, Purishkevitch, when the result of the voting was announced : "*Finis Finlandiae !*"

The Finnish Diet whose 'report' on this Bill was asked for, would take no notice of it or its enactments. No Finnish representatives were then, or ever later, elected to serve on the Duma or the Council of Empire : but an address to the Czar was adopted, setting out the unconstitutional nature of the measure voted in Russia, and asking for its repeal. The only reply which came from St. Petersburg was the dissolution of the Diet.

And so the wearisome story goes on year after year : all its details do not here concern us, only a few salient facts must be stressed. In September, 1911, Stolypin was murdered at Kiev by a Russian Jew with connexions both among the Russian revolutionaries and the Imperial Police. Finland had nothing to do with this murder ; but even as he lay on his death-bed, the Russian statesman would go on uttering imprecations against Finland. It looked for a moment as if a more enlightened policy might now become the order of the day in Russia, but these hopes were soon falsified. In Finland, the measures of oppression sometimes took on a purely grotesque character. For example, Finland was for her sea-borne trade, in her own or foreign vessels, essentially dependent upon the services of a body of skilled pilots who knew the channels of the amazingly intricate Finnish archipelago to a nicety, their knowledge being derived from notions handed down from father to son for centuries. This splendid body of men, in the service of the Finnish State, was by an unconstitutional ordinance in 1912 placed under Russian control, with the result that the vast majority of the Finnish pilots resigned. The Russian Government now produced a staff of pilots from the shores of the Caspian Sea, who, of course, could not know the beginning of their job. The Gulfs of Finland and of Bothnia were, as a result, strewn

with wrecks; foreign (including British) Chambers of Commerce protested: all to no avail.

The conflict which had the most profound repercussions in Finland was, however, the one which arose over a Law called the Equality Law. Passed by the Russian legislative bodies, but not by the Finnish Diet, it purported to put Russian subjects in Finland on an absolutely equal footing with Finnish subjects. The 'grievance' thus remedied, was of an entirely fictitious nature, having no practical consequences at all, since Russians had lived and prospered in Finland for generations under the regulations which sprang automatically from Finland's sworn status as an autonomous Grand Duchy. It was, however, precisely that status that the Russian Government was out to destroy; and so, in the name of the Equality Law, conflicts were sought with the Finnish authorities over such trifling matters as trade licences for pedlars, etc. When the law-abiding Finnish officials refused to comply with the regulations of the Equality Law, they were subjected to special penalties now prescribed for such cases—trial, no longer in Finland, but in Russia, and terms of imprisonment in Russian jails. This vexatious persecution went on from 1912 onwards for years, in fact until the Russian Revolution in 1917; and at one moment, in 1913, practically the whole of the Court of Appeal of Wiborg—the tribunal of which Gustaf Mannerheim's grandfather had been the first President—found itself locked into a prison in St. Petersburg for no other crime than to have observed the laws of Finland.

Concurrently, the Russification of the personnel of the Government and the administration of Finland went on at a quickening pace. The most influential post in the Finnish administration was that of the Minister Secretary of State for Finland in St. Petersburg, who maintained the direct contact with the Czar: this post was held under great and increasing difficulties from 1906 to 1913 by a fearless Finnish patriot, General Baron Langhoff, for whom the Czar had a great personal regard. When Baron Langhoff under the stress of circumstances had to resign in April, 1913, a forlorn hope

had been entertained in Finland that perhaps Gustaf Mannerheim might be appointed to the post, seeing that he was personally *bien vu* by the Czar and might have had a chance of stemming the tide of the destruction in Finland. The post went, however, to General Markov, the head of the Russified puppet government in Helsingfors; and he again was succeeded by a Russian, M. Borovitinov. Finland, then, on the eve of the World War, was experiencing the full blast of Russia's policy of oppression; and hatred of Russia was rampant in the country as never before.

The World War began on the eastern front on Germany declaring war in Russia on July 31st, 1914: and a couple of hours after a general mobilization had been ordered in Russia, the Cavalry Brigade of Guards, commanded by Gustaf Mannerheim at Warsaw, had entrained on its way towards the Austrian frontier. His old chief from the days of his first feats of arms in the Russo-Japanese War, Colonel, now Lieutenant-General, Prince Toumanov, was on August 6th given the command of a group of forces, to which Major-General Mannerheim's cavalry brigade also belonged; and it now became the task of these forces, which were moved towards the Austrian frontier and the River San, to protect the concentration of the 4th Russian army in the neighbourhood of Lublin. Prince Toumanov's cavalry detachment, after various reconnaissances and skirmishes, was able to establish by August 9th that strong Austrian forces were advancing across the San; and, in consequence, the Russian Commander concentrated his troops in the neighbourhood of the city of Krasnik, about thirty miles S.W. of Lublin.

By August 16th it was evident that the Austrians were advancing on a wide front, and the threat to the concentration of the 4th Russian army became a very real one. The next day, having received further news about the movements of the Austrians, an attack by whom was imminent, Prince Toumanov, from his headquarters to the north of Krasnik, hurriedly sent an order to Gustaf Mannerheim, who was quartered actually at Krasnik, to move at once to a position

south of the city, and to hold it at any cost. For this purpose, Gustaf Mannerheim's troops were reinforced with two *sotnias* of frontier guard cavalry.

Gustaf Mannerheim promptly acted upon the order received, occupying a position a little to the south of Krasnik, which he had reconnoitred the previous day. While this manœuvre was taking place, there arrived further reinforcements from Prince Toumanov, namely, the 13th Regiment of Ulans. This force—which amounted to about one-third of the forces now at the disposal of Gustaf Mannerheim—was at once despatched by him to carry out a deep outflanking movement, more than six miles behind the enemy's front. Here the typical Mannerheim touch comes in: it is as good an instance as any of his characteristic method of 'defensive by means of offensive,' using light, mobile forces, of which the world has heard so much lately.

Contact with the enemy was quickly established, and violent fighting was not slow in developing. The Austrians, under General Bruderman—their strength was probably two infantry regiments, two batteries, and one cavalry division—were, however, unable to advance; and at a given moment Gustaf Mannerheim's cavalry attacked the enemy, who fell back in disorder, losing several hundred prisoners. From the flank and the back the 13th Regiment of Ulans kept up a machine-gun fire, which was a contributory cause to the Austrian defeat.

After dark the forces of Prince Toumanov were withdrawn some six miles towards the right flank: but the aim of the engagement had been achieved. The Austrian advance had been checked for several days, which meant a corresponding gain of time for the concentration of the 4th Russian army. Moreover, the engagement at Krasnik having shown that the Austrians were advancing more towards the west than had been expected, appropriate counter-measures could be taken.

It was generally recognized that the success achieved was principally due to Gustaf Mannerheim's presence of mind and skill in directing the movements of his forces. A high

Russian military honour, the award of the 'Sabre of St. George' was the visible expression of this.

The affair at Krasnik, being Gustaf Mannerheim's first brilliant feat of arms during the World War, has here been analysed at some length. It was followed by other equally brilliant feats; but to treat of them in corresponding detail would take us too far, and the remainder of his career as a General in the Russian army will therefore be set out with greater succinctness.

During the next few months Gustaf Mannerheim was in the thick of the heavy fighting then taking place in Poland. During the defence of the River Chodel, north of Opole, against the Army Corps of General Kummer (August 30th to September 1st), he again carried out a characteristically daring and successful *coup*, outflanking the left wing of the Austrian army, with four cavalry regiments and two mounted batteries. The upshot was the headlong flight of the Austrians, who lost a thousand prisoners to the Russians. Still more striking was the success which Gustaf Mannerheim achieved after his brigade had been attached to the army of General Delsal. During the engagements which took place on the line Opatov-Klimontov, west of the Vistula in southern Poland (October 2nd to 4th), he saved the entire army by taking action wholly on his own initiative and even in defiance of orders that had been given him, thus securing the only possible retreat for the Russian forces. This exploit brought him the bestowal of Russia's highest military decoration—the Fourth Class of the Order of St. George.

Fighting in Poland, of course, took him over ground which was very familiar to him, partly from visits under happier circumstances. At one juncture he thus found himself on the estate of Chroberz, belonging to the Marquis Wielopolski, whose guest he had been for a roebuck shoot. He gave orders that the artillery was to avoid shelling the château of Chroberz: and after the retreat of the Austrians, the owner invited Gustaf Mannerheim to dine with him. The General accepted on condition that all the officers of his brigade were

invited too. To this the Marquis consented in the best eighteenth-century style, and at the repast the large gathering cheerfully partook of the Polish national dish *bigos*—a stew of meat and cabbage—which requires days to prepare. Had it been originally intended, the guests wondered, for the Austrians?

In February, 1915, Gustaf Mannerheim was appointed to the command of the 12th Cavalry Division: and all this year he saw a great deal of fighting on the Polish front, where, it will be recalled, the German-Austrian armies after the breakthrough between Tarnow and Gorlice in May proceeded to a series of remarkable victories. Later in the year, fighting was particularly fierce in eastern Galicia and the Bukowina: and here Gustaf Mannerheim, who had been appointed Acting Commander of the 2nd Cavalry Corps, again distinguished himself. During the winter of 1915-1916 his cavalry division fought under General Shtsherbatshev's command in Podolia; and in the spring of 1916 he participated in the break-through of the enemy positions at Luck. Indeed, down to November of 1916 he was constantly engaged in the fighting which, with fluctuating fortune, took place in this part of the war theatre.

The end of 1916 saw Gustaf Mannerheim's transference, with his cavalry division, to the Roumanian front, where, to start with, he took over a mountainous sector in the Carpathians some thirty miles in length. The detachment which he commanded was composed of Russian and Roumanian forces and was known as the 'Wrancza Group.' Hard fighting ensued for some weeks, and to this phase belongs an episode, which the present writer once heard from Gustaf Mannerheim's own lips and which deserves to be recorded here since it paints the man. He was witnessing the march past of large contingents of German prisoners and, addressing one of the men, remarked on the uselessness of Germany's waging unending war. He asked how long Germany would persevere. "Until we win, Excellency" ("*Bis wir siegen, Excellenz*,") came the quiet answer, and it drew from Gustaf

Mannerheim an expression of approval which the German soldier who had spoken up so fearlessly perhaps had hardly expected. It was not the conventional response of Imperial Russian Generals.

This campaign in the Carpathians was, however, not of long duration : by the middle of January, 1917, the Russian cavalry troops on this front were transferred to Bessarabia (at that time, of course, still part of Russia) ; and it was there that Gustaf Mannerheim learnt of the Russian Revolution in March of the same year. Even after the Revolution these troops and Gustaf Mannerheim with them participated in the fighting which from the beginning of May until the middle of October took place on the Roumanian front. His promotion to Lieutenant-General and Commander of the 6th Cavalry Army Corps falls within this period.

The rapid disintegration which, generally speaking, took place in the Russian army immediately after the Revolution is a matter of universal knowledge. Certain units of this army remained, however, for a while comparatively unaffected by the tendencies towards dissolution and insubordination : and the troops under Gustaf Mannerheim belonged to these exceptions. Ominous symptoms began, however, eventually to show themselves : and matters came to a head when the local Army Commissar, contrary to his promise to the General, set free some dragoons who had arrested an officer on account of a speech which the latter had made at the officers' mess. The case was of importance from the principle which it raised : and the impossibility for Gustaf Mannerheim of any longer remaining an officer of the army in which he had served so long now became plainly evident to him. He has himself related the circumstances under which his break with the Russian army came about. "The appropriate moment," he says, "came as if sent by Providence. One day, when I was taking a rather fiery horse out for a trial ride, he fell under me and put my leg out of joint. I was taken back to my staff quarters and put to bed, and a doctor was sent for. 'You will have to stay in bed now for a couple

of months, General,' said the doctor. 'A pity,' I thought, 'but I can perfectly well exercise my command from my bed.' During the night, as I lay awake, a thought, however, crossed my mind. I said to myself: 'You have been waiting for an opportunity; and it is obvious that this opportunity has now come.' The next morning I summoned my staff and bade them good-bye.

" 'I now leave for Odessa and want to thank you for your services.'

" 'But surely, sir, you are coming back?'

" 'No, I am not coming back.'

"I stepped into my motor-car, asked the doctor to accompany me, and once at Odessa underwent my treatment there."

At Odessa, Gustaf Mannerheim received a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army, Duhonin, relieving him of his command on account of 'political conflicts'; and at the same time it was conveyed to him that he could easily get this order cancelled. Gustaf Mannerheim did not, however, take the hint, but sent the Commander-in-Chief a letter in which he stated that he had already vacated his command, and did not wish to resume it in the future.

A characteristic episode occurred a little later at Odessa: some of his former soldiers happened to meet him one day walking in the streets of Odessa, in civilian clothes. This was a time when the saluting of officers had long ago been given up in the Russian army: yet on seeing Gustaf Mannerheim the men immediately drew up and saluted him in rigorous conformity with the old regulations.

During his convalescence at Odessa, the Bolshevik Revolution in St. Petersburg occurred on November 7th, and about four weeks later—actually on December 3rd—Gustaf Mannerheim started on his long journey home. The whole of Russia was aflame with revolution, and murders of officers occurred all the time. Nevertheless, he claimed the accommodation on the train to which he was entitled as a General, and resumed his full uniform, epaulettes and all. From this

attitude he never wavered, in spite of the political dangers of the enterprise and the accidents of a more humdrum nature which befell his train. He was even able to give much-needed protection to a number of fellow-travellers—among them some English hospital nurses—by extending to them the hospitality of his carriage. And, in spite of everything, the party reached St. Petersburg safely—on December 11th, 1917.

During the period which Gustaf Mannerheim spent travelling across Russia, Finland had declared her independence on December 6th, as will be set out in greater detail presently. Insisting upon legal punctilio to the last, he now reported to the supreme military authorities, that, having served in the Russian army precisely because he was a Finnish subject, he now no longer could continue that service. A passport from the Bolsheviki was normally necessary for a journey to Finland : but an application to the Soviet authorities was something Gustaf Mannerheim never could bring himself to making. He went to the Wiborg Station with his Odessa evacuation ticket, valid only as far as St. Petersburg, and a certificate of his Finnish citizenship : on these flimsy papers, he managed to secure admission to the train, which at long last brought him back to Helsingfors, about the middle of December.

It is now necessary for us to retrace our steps chronologically in order to survey the development of the political situation in Finland. The outbreak of the World War showed once again how deep-seated political loyalty was in the country : for, after all that Finland had experienced at the hands of the Czar during the past few years, an attitude of solidarity with the Empire yet found many and influential advocates among persons whose patriotism could not be suspect. The Finnish railways fulfilled the tasks allotted to them during the mobilization in a manner which drew warm acknowledgments from Russian military quarters. It will be recalled that the Czar had suppressed the Finnish army ; but many Finns

volunteered for service in the Russian army, and even the raising of a special Finnish corps was mooted.

Then, like a cold douche came the publication, on November 17th, 1914, of a complete programme for the Russification of Finland, agreed upon by the Russian Government. The programme in question was a most comprehensive and detailed one: and had history given Russia a chance of carrying it into effect, this would have meant the complete obliteration of Finland as a Nation and as a State.

It is held nowadays that the publication of this programme occurred by mistake; and anyone who, like the present writer, at the time was attending to Finnish political interests in an allied country, can bear witness to the immense embarrassment which that cynical declaration of an intention to destroy an entire people created in England and France, at war for the express purpose of safeguarding the rights of small nations. But as a symptom of Russia's intentions with regard to Finland, this programme by no means stood alone; and taking advantage of the fact that in war-time criticism of an Ally was bound to be subdued in England and France, Russia now proceeded to more ruthless acts of oppression in Finland than ever before in her history. Among deportations to Siberia, the one which caused the greatest indignation in Finland was that of Pehr Evind Svinhufvud, the noted patriot, who—as stated earlier in this chapter—had occupied the Speaker's chair at many Diets. Having publicly declared that the highest Law Officer in Finland had been illegally appointed to his post, since he was a Russian, M. Svinhufvud was first summarily dismissed from his Judgeship; and when he continued to ignore this new illegality, he was arrested in his own Court, on November 25th, 1914, and forthwith dispatched to a remote village in Siberia.

In countless other ways Finland was now dragooned: her best officials were steadily vanishing into Russian prisons, the Press was muzzled, the Diet never summoned, though in accordance with the Constitution it should have met annually. Its mandate having expired, new elections were held in

February, 1916; but as these were held to be proceedings of purely academic interest, there was great apathy among the electors, though less so among those of the Socialist Party. As a result, Finland for the first, and so far only time in her history found herself with a Socialist majority in her powerless parliament which never met—103 Socialists against 97 non-Socialists. It is an interesting sidelight on the workings of certain systems of proportional representation, that this should have been the outcome of an election in which 419,179 non-Socialist votes were cast against 376,030 Socialist votes; and these figures are here also given because they have important bearings on events which were to follow.

Whilst the black-out in more senses than one was descending upon Finland, certain developments affecting the working classes ensued, which it is important not to pass over. After the outbreak of war the Russian Government decided to undertake a vast scheme of fortification works in Finland, as a protection against an attack on the part of Germany or Sweden. This scheme provided for rings of forts blasted into the rocks, enclosing the more important cities; for systems of trenches and barbed-wire defences; and for various other works of defence across vast tracts of land. Very large numbers of workmen were needed in order to build all these fortifications, especially as time pressed; and—apart from some ghastly gangs of Chinese labourers specially imported for the purpose—it was Finnish working men who carried out this gigantic task, though they actually were under the command of Russian officers and inevitably came into close contact also with the privates of the large Russian forces stationed in the country. The pay was excellent, money flowed freely, and the standard of performance was anything but exacting: 'graft,' so typical of Russia, was everywhere. Demoralization of these large masses of Finnish workingmen hence quickly followed; and their fraternization with the Russian soldiers created a bond of solidarity, of which Finland was before long to experience the disastrous effects.

In a situation so tragic, and in the presence of the complex problems of the World War, it was inevitable that different counsels should prevail. Finland was not bereft of political contacts with England and France; and early in the World War it was, of course, recognized that the United States were to have an important influence upon the settlement at the Peace Conference. A first contact was, accordingly, established with the Foreign Office at the end of 1914; and at the beginning of 1915 a Finnish political mission was sent to London, whence it proceeded to America, spending again some time in London before returning to Finland. The mission did, undoubtedly, some useful work in bringing the Finnish problem to the notice of British and American statesmen; but it could obtain nothing in the way of concrete results. For part of his stay in London it had the advantage of the participation of Carl Mannerheim in its councils: and his far-sightedness, political experience, and balanced judgment were never more in evidence than during these London deliberations. He thereupon left England to return to Sweden, and that was the last that the present writer ever saw of him: for he died in Stockholm a few months later in the summer of 1915, long before his time—only just fifty. To all those who knew Carl Mannerheim and collaborated with him, the achievement of Gustaf Mannerheim must always bear the character of the logical outcome of the endeavours, for which the elder brother worked and fought so splendidly: and his direct influence upon Gustaf Mannerheim, though difficult to assess, must yet have been considerable.

Among the younger intelligentsia in Finland, the thought of securing the country's independence by force of arms had for some time been slowly and dimly taking shape: and the publication of the programme for the complete Russification of Finland gave that thought the fullest possible definition in wide circles. Now that Russia was involved in a war with a great military power, Finland had at last a real chance: only how was that chance to be taken? Even the small Finnish army, which had existed up to 1901, had been

disbanded; and no officers had been trained in Finland since 1903.

It was but natural that the adherents of the new idea should turn in the first instance to Sweden, Finland's mother country, and bound to her by countless ties of tradition and common interest. The suggestion was put forward that a number of young Finns might receive military training in Sweden: but the scheme was soon turned down in that country and was never revived.

It was then that a bold step was taken, which for a long time was looked at askance in many quarters in Finland: to turn for assistance to Germany. Contact with Berlin was established through various channels; and in January, 1915, Germany agreed to receive two hundred Finnish youths in Lockstedt Camp in Holstein, where they were to be put through a few weeks' course of military training. So modest were the beginnings of a movement which was to be of incalculable importance for the securing of Finland's independence; and it is characteristic of Germany's hesitancy to give much emphasis to the enterprise that the young men were first described as *Pfadfinder*, that is Boy Scouts, and that their uniforms were of the pattern connoted by that designation.

The two hundred youths arrived and began their training with the utmost zest and earnestness of purpose. It soon became evident that the first programme was utterly insufficient; it was gradually extended, and finally, on August 8th, 1915, the Kaiser authorized the formation of a regular Jaeger (or Chasseur) Battalion, recruited entirely from Finns. Its strength was to be two thousand men; and it was to consist of four Jaeger companies, one pioneer company, one machine-gun company, one cyclist detachment, and an artillery troop which eventually grew into a complete howitzer battery.

The recruiting for this battalion now began, and forms one of the most thrilling chapters in recent Finnish history. Everything, of course, had to be done with the utmost secrecy: and in a country honeycombed with the Russian police, the

drafting of two thousand men out of the country presented almost insurmountable obstacles. Ordinary methods of transit soon proved impossible; and a whole system of 'underground' routes with relay stations had to be organized, by which the recruits reached the Swedish frontier or the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, whence they crossed over to Sweden. Most of the work was done during the winter of 1915-1916, when the snowbound country in the far north and the frozen Gulf of Bothnia offered welcome opportunities for skiing, but also provided tremendous tests of endurance. Before long the Russian police got wind of what was happening; and the stories of hairbreadth escapes with which the chronicles of those days are teeming make wonderful reading. It was indeed not always a question of escapes, for arrests were made in increasing numbers: and in addition to the actual recruits, their helpers, and accomplices, as well as perfectly innocent friends and members of their families were sent in crowds first to the cells of the police-stations in Finland, and thence to the prisons of St. Petersburg. But in spite of all, the recruiting went on: and by June, 1916, the battalion was practically complete, embracing representatives of all classes of society, and of the two races, Finnish and Swedish, which inhabit Finland.

The greater part of the battalion—now officially designated as the 27th Royal Prussian Jaeger Battalion—was sent to the German east front in May, 1916. The intention was to increase the efficiency of the battalion through service at the front; and although the move was received with misgivings in some Finnish quarters, it was cordially welcomed amongst the young soldiers themselves. The battalion was assigned a sector in the marshes of the Misse River in Courland, and received its baptism of fire at midsummer, when its positions were heavily bombarded by the Russians. One month later the Jaegers distinguished themselves in the battle of Schmar-den, when they took part in the hand-to-hand fighting which developed in the Russian positions. It is one of the ironies of history that in this engagement which ended with the

repulse of the Russians, the latter were commanded by General Kuropatkin, to whom the destruction of Finland's army in 1901 was chiefly due and who now re-emerged after his eclipse, brought about by the Russo-Japanese War, for an epilogue which was to prove equally inglorious.

At the end of August the battalion was transferred to another sector of the front on the Bay of Riga, when it was in still closer contact with the enemy than it had been on the Misse River; though little more than desultory fighting developed during its stay at this part of the front. Nevertheless, these were very valuable months for perfecting the efficiency of the battalion as a fighting instrument. The differences of opinion as to whether it was proper for the Jaegers to be employed at the front at all, gradually became more marked, both within the battalion and outside it; and in December, 1916, the troop was withdrawn from the front and stationed at Libau. There now followed for the battalion a period of monotonous waiting for more than a year, during which friction with the German authorities was not avoided. However, the battalion survived all such conflicts; it remained an asset of enormous value on the day when Finland would rise in arms against her oppressor. Only when would that day come?

Its coming was heralded by the revolution which swept the Russian Empire in March, 1917. In Finland, all the tools of the Czarist regime from the Governor-General downwards vanished as if by magic, certain of the most compromised and hated amongst them being taken to Russia to meet their fate there. All political prisoners were released from the Finnish prisons; and before long the country saw again those Finns who, during the past few years, had been deported to Russia—no one amongst them greeted on his return with greater enthusiasm than M. Svinhufvud. The provisional Government in Russia on March 20th issued a manifesto, repealing all the illegal ordinances regarding Finland issued by its predecessor; a cabinet for Finland was set up, consisting of six Socialist and six non-Socialist members, the Premiership

going to one of the former, Oskari Tokoi ; and for the post of Governor-General was chosen Michael Stakhovitch, a typical Russian *grand seigneur*, but more broad-minded than most. (It was, incidentally, under his brother that Gustaf Mannerheim had first served in the Russo-Japanese War.)

To the extent now indicated, the first days of the Revolution undoubtedly brought a scene of wonderful relief to Finland ; but disquieting symptoms were also evident. Right at the outset there was indiscriminate murdering in the streets of Helsingfors and elsewhere, Russian soldiers venting their hatred of their superiors, and in so doing resorting to actions of revolting cruelty. That fratriciding between the Russian *soldatesque* and the working classes in Finland, of which the work on the Russian fortifications had given a foretaste, now assumed enormous proportions : mass meetings were held everywhere in the open, and the violence of revolutionary speechmaking knew no bounds—though, of course, what was said by the Russian orators was not understood by the Finns. The alliance between the proletariat in the factories and the proletariat in uniform was proclaimed in the official Soviet newspaper published in Finland. A police force, created for the maintenance of order, came wholly under revolutionary influence.

It was under conditions such as these that the Diet of Finland met on April 4th—the Diet which had been elected under general indifference during the Czarist regime, since its powers were known to be nil ; and which now, thanks to intervening events, found itself more powerful than any Diet in Finland's previous history. The exiguous majority of six votes, which the Socialists had over all other parties combined, carried one of their men, Kullervo Akilles Manner—romantically named, Haiti-fashion, after heroes of the Finnish and Greek mythologies—to the Speaker's chair ; and the majority of the mandates in the various parliamentary committees also went to the Socialists. Moreover, in order to influence the deliberations of the Diet, vast gatherings of the proletariat, armed and unarmed, were summoned to surround

the Diet house when decisions of importance were pending : in this way, for instance, bills concerning the municipal administration and the eight-hour day were forced through parliament. And while this mob rule went on, there was inflation of the currency ; also, the threat of famine in the land—after poor harvests and in the absence of food imports—became day by day more grave.

The growth of the idea of Finland's independence, in the midst of all this, was, however, a steady one : though the attitude of the Socialists did much to hinder it. An important episode in this connexion is that which centres round the law known as the Power Law. The Government in the summer presented a Bill to the Diet, which provided for the transference of certain prerogatives, formerly vested in the monarch, to the Finnish Cabinet ; and as a result of arrangements made by the Socialists with the Bolsheviks in Russia who at that time had not yet got the control of affairs, but hoped to seize it shortly—this Bill was amended out of recognition by the Committee known as the ' Grand Committee ' of the Diet. As amended, the Bill enacted that all Power in Finland should be wielded by the Diet : but left the control of foreign affairs and of military matters to the Russian Government. It was thus a definite negation of the idea of independence : indeed, when one member of the Diet proposed a resolution to the effect that the Diet regarded it as its right and duty to claim independence for Finland, and reserved its right to raise that matter later on, the Socialist majority defeated this motion. In the end, the Power Law, as amended by the Socialists, was voted, on July 18th.

At that very moment the Bolshevik allies of the Finnish Socialists were in open rebellion against the Provisional Government in Russia : and out of this first trial of strength the Provisional Government emerged victorious. In Finland the immediate consequence of this victory was that the Provisional Government dissolved the Diet, and fixed new elections for October 1st and 2nd.

The result of these elections was a most notable one.

Here we have a country in a state of revolutionary ferment, voting in conformity with the most democratic electoral system in the world. And yet the Socialists were defeated : their mandates fell from 103 to 92, while the non-Socialists obtained a total of 108 seats. The total of Socialist votes cast was 444,532 against 551,573—figures which it is of interest to compare with those of the ‘academic’ elections of 1916, when the corresponding figures were 376,030 against 419,179—a non-Socialist victory in actual votes, though producing a Socialist majority of mandates, seeing that proportional representation, if the whole country is not turned into one constituency, favours the largest party unduly.

It is the instinctive revulsion of the majority of the Finnish nation against the Bolshevik contagion which is reflected in the result of the 1917 elections. The Socialists had been beaten, not indeed in a fair battle, for all the technical advantages were with them : but beaten they were nevertheless. This beating they would not take, but proceeded instead to revolution. Herein lies the moral condemnation of Socialist acts in Finland during the following months ; and all those who write or speak on Finnish politics would do well to ponder over this fact.

We must, however, not anticipate events, but return to the position as it was developing in Finland. The Socialist members of the Government left it in August, their non-Socialist colleagues retaining their seats in order that the government of the country should be carried on somehow, though they had scarcely any means of asserting their authority. In September, Michael Stakhovitch resigned his post as Governor-General, and proceeded as Russian Ambassador to Madrid, where the present writer met him a few months later, as well disposed towards Finland as ever, even if inclined, as so many of his fellow-countrymen at the time, to underrate the staying powers of the Bolsheviks. As his successor, the Provisional Government appointed N. Nekrasov, the last holder of the office of Governor-General of Finland : and negotiations were on foot between the

Finnish and the Russian authorities for an amicable settlement of the Russo-Finnish differences—with a proviso entitling Finland eventually to claim her full independence—when the blow fell. The second rising of the Bolsheviks succeeded where the first had failed : the Provisional Government was swept away on November 7th, and Lenin (who had been hiding in Finland until October, after the fiasco of the July rising) stepped into the place of Kerenski.

Meanwhile the preparation for 'direct action' in Finland had been pushed on energetically by the Socialists. Their more advanced wing proceeded to the organization of an armed force for which the name of the armed Socialist formations in 1905-1906—The Red Guards—was revived. Arms were readily obtained from the Russian troops stationed in Finland ; Russian N.C.O.s saw to the training, the words of command were Russian, and the membership cards were printed in the same language. The recruits came largely from those crowds of Finnish fortification workers, formerly in Russian service, to which reference has already been made : and the common or garden hooligan element was plentifully represented.

Anarchy and lawlessness were by now rampant all over the country, though more especially in the southern part ; murdering and pillaging went on in increasing proportions. One of the most hideous episodes was that of the murder in cold blood on November 6th of a well-known agriculturist, Alfred Kordelin, who subsequently was found to have left the whole of his fortune—some forty million Finnish marks, at the time over £1,000,000—to purposes connected with the education of the people. The present Premier of Finland, Risto Ryti, only just managed to escape becoming another victim of the same tragedy, which did, however, claim one further death. The Government did its best to provide some protection for peaceable citizens and law and order generally, but it was hampered in all directions. A movement for raising Voluntary Defence Corps locally now began to gain strength, but the question of equipment presented great difficulties,

though some importations of arms took place during the autumn.

On November 1st the new Diet met in Helsingfors : and simultaneously the Central organization of the Socialist Party published a list of sweeping demands which the Diet was to accept : it is in this document that the term ' butcher guards ' occurs for the first time as a designation for the non-Socialist defence organizations. The whole idea of democratic, parliamentary government was by now getting more and more alien to the Socialists : and the central organization, which at first had not been associated with the creation of the Red Guards, now took over the direction of this force.

A few days after the Diet had assembled, the Congress of the Socialist Organization issued a definite ultimatum to the Diet : either the Socialist demands were to be granted, or a *general strike* was forthwith to be proclaimed. The strike which followed, on the Diet standing up to their threats, reduced Finland to chaos for a week and was marked by disorders and massacres on a grand scale, notably in Carelia, where a gangster named Kaljunen led a veritable campaign of murder and destruction. After a week, the more responsible of the Socialist leaders recovered, however, some of their senses : so the strike was called off in a proclamation, which closed with a challenge to democratic government : ' The strike comes to an end, but the revolution continues.' It is interesting, in the light of recent events, to recall, that when the Socialist Party Congress met a few days later in Helsingfors, it was addressed by one Joseph Stalin, who spurred the Finnish comrades on to continued struggle, quoting Danton's famous exhortation : '*Toujours de l'audace.*'

By the time this Congress met, the attempts to get out of the impasse and provide Finland with a government based on a parliamentary majority had, however, borne fruit. M. Svinhufvud, as Prime Minister, headed the combination, which included representatives of all non-Socialist parties in Finland. After stormy debates in the Diet, it was in a night

sitting between November 26th and 27th accorded a vote of confidence—100 for, 80 against.

The first task urgently incumbent upon the new Government was to settle the question of Finland's international status once and for all. A simply but impressively worded Declaration of Independence was agreed upon by the Cabinet ; and this was read to the Diet by the Premier on December 4th. The solemnity and importance of this moment was recognized by everyone except the Socialist members, who did all they could to prevent the Declaration being adopted. Their efforts were, however, of no avail, but they still could exercise their votes : so when the Declaration was put to the Diet it was adopted by the narrow majority of 12—100 against 88—votes, the latter all cast by the Socialists. This was on December 6th, which has ever since been celebrated as Finland's Independence Day.

No Finnish Government had ever before been faced with tasks as immense as those which awaited the Government just installed ; and it had to tackle them with resources of strength as slender as they can well be imagined.

Such was the position of Finland when Gustaf Mannerheim reached Helsingfors on a December day in 1917.

CHAPTER V

THE RECOGNITION OF FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE. GUSTAF MANNERHEIM APPOINTED COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE FINNISH ARMY. RED REVOLUTION AND RED TERROR. GUSTAF MANNERHEIM'S FIRST VICTORIES

THE new Finnish Government lost no time in endeavouring to obtain international recognition of Finland's independence; and as the first phase of the negotiations for this purpose has a direct bearing on problems which were soon to face Gustaf Mannerheim, it will be of advantage here briefly to recapitulate this chapter of diplomatic history.

The difficulties which had to be overcome by the negotiations at the outset were many and complex. For one thing, it was a question for Finland of parting company with an Empire which was in a state of revolution, whose Government was not internationally recognized, and, indeed, aimed at fomenting revolution within the borders of Finland. Moreover, there was a world war on: and the friendly relations which, through the logic of circumstances, had developed between Finland and Germany, were no secret to the Allies, who naturally had to take them into account when deciding upon their attitude to the new state. At the time, there was a great deal of talk about the Constituent Assembly which was to meet in Russia in January, 1918; and as regards the recognition of Finland's independence by Russia, the Finnish Government originally held the view that it was with the Constituent Assembly that the Diet of Finland ought to negotiate.

Immediately after the Diet had voted the independence

of Finland, the Consuls of the three principal Allied Powers—England, France, and the United States—accredited in Helsingfors, had offered to transmit to their respective Governments any request for recognition that the Finnish Government might make. In Finland it was, for obvious historical reasons, felt that the first recognition of her independence ought, if possible, to come from Sweden; and already on December 8th a Finnish mission in Stockholm sounded the Swedish Premier, M. Edén, on the point. The Swedish statesman was extremely non-committal and warned against precipitate action; and his Danish and Norwegian opposite numbers, whom the Finnish mission subsequently visited, for all their general sympathy with Finland, took up no essentially different attitude. While these contacts were being established, a Finnish representative went to Berlin on an analogous errand; and brought back to his colleagues in Stockholm the definite advice of the German Government to seek recognition first of all from the Soviet Government. On this advice being communicated to Helsingfors, the Finnish Government after some hesitation yielded; and on December 27th it sent two representatives to confer with Lenin himself.

The interview with the formidable Bolshevik leader took place the next day, and, at least outwardly, lacked nothing in cordiality: and Lenin assured the two Finns that, if their Government would ask for recognition of Finland's independence from the Soviet Government, their request would undoubtedly be granted.

The Finnish emissaries hastened back to Helsingfors to bring the good tidings to the Government. The appropriate document was immediately drawn up; later the same day, the emissaries caught the night train back to St. Petersburg, the delegation now being strengthened by the inclusion of the Prime Minister himself.

December 31st, 1917, was the historic date when the Soviet Government extended its recognition to the independence of Finland. Not that this act was accompanied

by any special ceremony or solemnity : indeed, it took place in an atmosphere vividly suggestive of Maxim Gorky's pictures of Russian life. The day before, the Finnish delegates had only succeeded very late in getting into touch with the Secretary of the Soviet Government, who took exception to the fact that the document was addressed to ' The Government of Russia ' instead of ' The Soviet of the People's Commissaries.' The requisite alteration having been made, the document was taken the next day to Lenin's Secretary, Gorbатов, who announced that the Soviet of the People's Commissaries would meet in the evening, when the delegates could call again for an answer. At nine o'clock they were back, and were kept waiting for two or three hours, whilst there was general confusion in the Russian Government's Central Office : the air was thick with tobacco smoke, people were rushing about in all directions, and even babies were seen crawling on the floor. Shortly before midnight, the Finnish delegates were handed a typewritten document, stating that the Soviet of the People's Commissaries had decided to recommend to the Executive Committee (*a*) that the independence of Finland be recognized, and (*b*) that a Special Committee be appointed by arrangement with the Finnish Government, to carry out the practical measures which the separation of Finland from Russia entailed. M. Svinhufvud insisted on expressing his thanks to Lenin, who, however, had to be coaxed a lot before he would come out to shake hands and exchange a few friendly words. It was all very quickly over : and in this way, says a Finnish historian, did we emerge out of the Cave of the Cyclops.

The Executive Committee gave its sanction to the decision of the Soviet on January 4th, 1918, after hearing a report of Comrade Stalin, who inveighed against the pusillanimity of the Finnish Socialists, which brought it about that the Finnish nation now received its freedom from the ' bourgeois ' class, and not from the workers. Characteristically, point (*b*) in the recommendation of the Soviet was slightly varied : in its final form it enjoined the participation also of ' repre-

sentatives of the Finnish working class ' in the negotiations which were to take place regarding the appointment of the Committee to be charged with the practical measures which were to give effect to the separation of the two countries.

Even before these valuable results were achieved, a Finnish delegation had, on December 28th, formally approached the King of Sweden at Stockholm with a formal request for the recognition of Finland's independence. To this the King replied in a speech, couched in sympathetic and hopeful terms, but stressed the all-importance of an understanding with Russia being reached by Finland.

And now the remarkable thing happened: France, irrespective of the ties which Finland had been forming with Germany, granted unconditional recognition of Finland's independence on January 4th. It was a quick, impulsive, and generous gesture, thoroughly characteristic of Clemenceau, who had been influenced in making it—a fact up to now never revealed—by the advice tendered him by M. Paul Boyer, a great friend of Finland and head of the *École des langues Orientales* in Paris.

Sweden, by now, at last felt safe in no longer holding back: her official recognition came on January 4th, while that of Germany, granted on the same day, was not notified until January 6th. Greece accorded her recognition on January 6th: so it was a notable collection of recognitions, representative both of neutrals and of the two camps of belligerents, with which M. Svinhufvud on January 8th could appear before the Diet. And it is comforting to record that on this one occasion at least there were no divisions in the Chamber: all parties responded with equal enthusiasm as the Speaker called for cheers for a free Finland.

Further recognitions now followed in rapid succession before the end of January—from Norway and Denmark, from Austria, Hungary, from Switzerland, from Holland. But all was not plain sailing, and the negotiations with certain important Powers proved to be of a difficulty which, for the moment at any rate, was insurmountable. A case in point

is offered by the negotiations with the United States. It will be recalled that the United States Consul in Helsingfors had, immediately after the proclamation of Finland's independence, offered his good offices to the Finnish Government ; and Finland had obviously every interest in entering into direct and friendly relations with the United States Government, especially at a time when the food situation in the country was becoming graver every day. A mission, which was to notify to Washington the independence of Finland, and ask for its recognition, was therefore immediately appointed : it consisted of Dr. Ignatius and Professor Reuter, the latter one of the members of the Finnish mission which in 1915 had sought political contacts in the United States. As to Dr. Ignatius, he was already in America, endeavouring to negotiate purchases of foodstuffs for Finland, and encountering great difficulties, because the Finns were commonly held to be pro-Germans. Already on December 5th, before the independence had actually been voted by the Diet, M. Svinhufvud, sure of the result of the division on the next day, had cabled to Dr. Ignatius, informing him of the position and asking him to pass this information on to Mr. Lansing and to inquire whether the United States Government would receive a mission sent to request recognition of Finland's independence. All that Dr. Ignatius could obtain from Mr. Lansing was a declaration to the effect that the United States would not raise an objection to the arrival of a Finnish mission, but was not yet ready to take up a position with regard to the recognition of Finland's independence. Travelling from Finland to America was not an easy matter in those days, so Professor Reuter did not reach New York until February 13th, 1918, carrying with him the credentials of the mission ; and there-upon a fortnight elapsed until Mr. Lansing at last received the Finnish delegation on February 28th. The interview was a very brief affair, the Finnish delegation not even being asked to sit down ; and the result was a singularly meagre one : while the United States recognized that Finland had established a *de facto* Government, and expressed platonic

sympathies with her striving after independence, the President was unable to receive the mission as long as the internal troubles continued in Finland. Mr. Lansing therefore suggested that the mission should remain in the United States until the Finnish Government had proved its effectiveness, whereupon the delegates would 'probably' be received by the President and the independence of Finland could be 'discussed.' Meanwhile Mr. Lansing would not even receive the credentials of the mission, but handed them back to the delegates.

The official coolness thus shown towards Finland never changed during the stay of the Mission in the United States; and its work was increasingly hampered both by the activities of the emissary of the Finnish Reds in America, and by the growth of friendly relations between Finland and Germany. Attempts were made to reach the President through Colonel House, and all other possible channels of influence were tried; but it was all to no purpose. The delegates had to return to Finland, Professor Reuter in the spring, Dr. Ignatius somewhat later, without having achieved anything tangible. Such is, briefly, the story of the attitude of President Wilson's America in 1917-1918 towards Finland, then engaged in a death struggle to survive as a civilized State.

Very complicated too proved, in part, the task of the Mission which was to negotiate the recognition of the independence of Finland with Great Britain, France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, and the Holy See. This mission reached London on January 11th, 1918, and there appointed as its secretary the present writer. The request for the recognition of Finland's independence was presented to the then Foreign Secretary, Mr. A. J. Balfour, on January 18th. Mr. Balfour, whose attitude throughout the interview was one of the utmost friendliness, explained that the British Government fully understood Finland's striving after independence, and in this connexion expressed a sharp disapproval of the Czarist oppression which for years had been taking place in Finland. The British Government hoped, before long, to be in a

position to recognize Finland's independence *de jure* : but as the ally of Russia, Great Britain considered that she must first await that an organ, representative of the Russian State, defined its attitude to the question : and, according to information lately come to hand, there was reason to hope that such an organ would come into being. Should that organ, however, not materialize, the British Government would at once—words which Mr. Balfour particularly emphasized in speaking—re-examine the question of recognizing Finland's independence. An important practical step towards a *de jure* recognition had been taken, since the British Government had *de facto* recognized the independence of Finland by entering into direct relations with the Finnish Government through the British Consul at Helsingfors. Mr. Balfour concluded by expressing his firm conviction that Finland soon would take her place among the sovereign nations of the world.

Mr. Balfour's speech disclosed an attitude of genuine and unmistakable sympathy towards Finland ; and at the same time an absolute loyalty towards a Power which was still reckoned with as an ally—namely Russia. An utter disinclination to identify Russia with her Soviet rulers was also apparent ; and here it is interesting to note that the British Government's point of view at the time was identical with that of the Finnish Government when it proclaimed Finland's independence. For the ' organ representative of the Russian State ' was none other than our old friend, the Constituent Assembly, with which M. Svinhufvud too, as we saw, had at first meant to negotiate. The hopes expressed by Mr. Balfour that the ' organ ' he had in mind would materialize, sprang from the fact that on the very day when he met the Finnish mission the Constituent Assembly did, in fact, commence its meetings in St. Petersburg. But it was a body upon which the Bolsheviks were in a minority : and the world had not as yet got accustomed to the methods of the Soviet Government in dealing with a problem of that character. In point of fact, the Constituent Assembly had yet one more day

to live, after the day which saw its birth : Bolshevik soldiers put an end to its second meeting, on January 19th, and after that the Soviet Government declared the Constituent Assembly to be dissolved.

The negotiations with the British Government led to immediate and valuable results as regards the establishment of a Consular representation for Finland in England—nothing of the kind was achieved in the United States ; but though the Constituent Assembly died practically as soon as it was born, no progress was made towards a recognition *de jure* of Finland's independence. The relations between Great Britain and Finland thus remained for a long while on a pure *de facto* basis.

Its work in London temporarily concluded, the mission proceeded to France, where its task in the meantime had been reduced to the simple one of returning thanks for the recognition of Finland's independence granted by the French Government ; and nothing could have exceeded the warmth with which the delegation was received on all sides in France. The negotiations with the Belgian Government, carried out in its temporary home on French soil, Sainte-Adresse, near Havre, illustrated vividly the embarrassing position of a small power when its two chief allies—England and France—took up a different standpoint : and the reply of Belgium, for all its cordiality, had inevitably, in its essence, to be a non-committal one. Next in order of the countries visited by the mission came Spain where full recognition was secured without difficulty. In Rome, the Quirinal would do no more than declare its willingness to enter into *de facto* relations with the Finnish Government, wishing the question of principle to be shelved until the Peace Conference ; while the Vatican, on the other hand, accorded full and solemn recognition of Finland's independence on March 2nd.

Meanwhile, yet another Finnish delegation had secured recognition from Bulgaria and Turkey ; and early in May, recognition came from a South American State—the Argentine.

That, then, was the international background built up for

Finland's independence in the course of the first six months after it had been proclaimed.

When Gustaf Mannerheim about the middle of December, 1917, arrived at Helsingfors, he learnt for the first time in detail about the work which for some time had been going on for the purpose of achieving a double object—the independence of Finland and the re-establishment of law and order in the country. The full story of the Jaegers was now unfolded to him; he heard about the bold efforts to import arms into Finland, and about the gradual building up of the defence corps all over the country, but especially in the province of Ostrobothnia, on the northern part of the Gulf of Bothnia—a part of Finland inhabited by a race of brave and sturdy yeomen, whose love of independence was proverbial. The military organization of the country was concentrated in the hands of a committee, known as the Military Committee, whose members were drawn from the Corps of Officers of the Finnish army suppressed in 1901, and therefore to a great extent known to him personally.

The predominantly German orientation in Finnish political and military circles was something towards which he could not help being critical. For the last few years, he had fought the Germans in the World War, as a loyal, but determined enemy; and his own, instinctive sympathies were always Francophile. Therefore, when, after a brief stay in Helsingfors, he returned to St. Petersburg for a couple of weeks, he got into touch with the head of the French military mission in Russia, General Niessel, and inquired whether war material could not be obtained for Finland from the stocks of such that the French had built up on the Murman coast. No reply was, however, received to this inquiry, whether the time was too short or whether General Niessel felt he was not entitled to dispose of French war material in this fashion. Wherever Finland's war material came from, there was always in Gustaf Mannerheim already at this stage a strong conviction that Finland's independence was to be won

by her own sons, without the assistance of any foreign troops.

The last days of December, 1917, saw Gustaf Mannerheim back again at Helsingfors. His friends on the Military Committee now asked him to take part in their deliberations, and he accepted. The question as to who was to become the Commander-in-Chief of Finland's future army had already by then been considered; and the Military Committee had offered the appointment to a distinguished Finnish soldier, Lieutenant-General Claës Charpentier, who had held high command in the Russian army during the World War. A man decidedly out of the ordinary, and gifted, too, with a singularly winning personality, General Charpentier was, however, no longer quite in his prime. He was sixty years of age—Gustaf Mannerheim at the time was fifty—and he definitely lacked the 'drive' which the desperate military situation of Finland called for. After some hesitation, he had accepted the invitation extended to him.

The meetings of the Military Committee were held in different places in Helsingfors to minimize the risk of detection by the Reds, and the agenda contained a series of miscellaneous items, of greater or smaller importance. At the third meeting attended by Gustaf Mannerheim, much time was wasted discussing some minor point of finance, and attention was next claimed by the offer of the chief of a local defence corps, to take action which might have had incalculable repercussions on the whole military situation. At this point Gustaf Mannerheim intervened.

"I should like to express my thanks for the confidence shown me: but I do not consider myself able to attend these meetings any longer. I cannot share the responsibility which the committee has taken upon itself, as it is evident that the committee, as such, is not the master of the situation."

"But what do you consider should be done?" came the anxious inquiry from his colleagues.

"Gentlemen," replied Gustaf Mannerheim, "I have now attended three meetings at three different places. We may

be captured, all of us, at any moment, and in that case everything would be in jeopardy. The organization of this committee permits of discussion of important and unimportant matters, pell-mell, and things make no progress. My view is that we should act at once. An army staff should be set up for the purpose of creating a field army and a staff which, if required, can conduct operations. This should be done in a part of the country where a secure base is available; and let us go there to-morrow, if the last train for to-day has already left."

These words made a profound impression, under the spell of which the meeting broke up. When the committee met again the next day, the proposal made by Gustaf Mannerheim had been worked out in detail by General Charpentier, who expressed his willingness to proceed on such a basis, if the committee still wished him to be the Commander-in-Chief. Gustaf Mannerheim now spoke, expressing his entire approval of the project as elaborated, whereupon the proceedings terminated, and Gustaf Mannerheim left. The other members of the committee continued to confer, under an increasing sense of embarrassment: for it was obvious that here was the very man they wanted as their leader, and yet there was the previous appointment of General Charpentier standing in the way. Someone then thought of putting to the latter, whether he would not consent to representing the Military Committee, in effect as Secretary for War, in the Finnish Cabinet, while Gustaf Mannerheim would be appointed Commander-in-Chief. General Charpentier, however, as the great gentleman that he was, immediately released the committee from its engagements as regards himself: and the Military Committee at once proposed to the Government that Gustaf Mannerheim be appointed Commander-in-Chief.

The choice of a Commander-in-Chief was, of course, under the existing circumstances, a matter calling for the utmost thought and weighing of qualifications. Not only must he be a man of outstanding military ability, but he must also have the gifts of a great organizer—an organizer, indeed, out

of nothing ; and further, as the leader of the force which was to establish Finland's independence, he must, in addition, be a man round whom patriotic sentiment could crystallize. Finally, Finland's international position being as insecure as it was, there was absolute necessity for a man with an eye for wider political perspectives and possessing skill and courage as a diplomatist.

Every one of the conditions here set out Gustaf Mannerheim answered to perfection. And it should in this connexion also be stressed, that his long absence from Finland, so far from being a disadvantage, was in reality an unmixed advantage. It had saved him from contact with the more sordid sides of political life ; it gave him detachment and a position above parties.

On being informed of the decision of the Military Committee, Gustaf Mannerheim had asked for time to think the matter over, stressing his willingness to serve under General Charpentier ; but in the end he decided to defer to the wish of the committee. On January 16th he called on M. Svinhufvud at the Senate House in Helsingfors, and was verbally appointed Commander-in-Chief—the secrecy called for by the circumstances was so all-important, that written documents were avoided as far as possible. The General and the Prime Minister—both of them bearers of ancient Swedish names, but at the same time representative of all that is best in Finland—now met for the first time ; and the new Commander-in-Chief, in expressing his confidence to be able to lead the army of Finland to victory, stressed the importance of gaining that victory with Finnish forces alone. He added this sole request—that the Prime Minister should promise him not to ask for foreign intervention : a promise which M. Svinhufvud gave him, though accounts vary as to whether it was an unqualified or a qualified promise.

Speed of action was essential : but there was still much to be done in Helsingfors : and notably the financial basis of the new enterprise had to be seen to, as far as possible. The Government was in a difficulty about providing funds

through the Bank of Finland, since the Socialists were represented on its governing body, which was elected by the Diet. Gustaf Mannerheim therefore turned to the private banks in Finland, and met with a generous response. "We will gladly give what we can," a leading banker said to him. "If you are victorious, we risk nothing; and if you are defeated, there will, anyway, be nothing left of our millions."

It was decided to install the G.H.Q. at Vasa, an idyllic city on the Gulf of Bothnia, rather more than two hundred miles north-west of Helsingfors in a straight line. A fairly strong Russian garrison was stationed there, but being the capital of Southern Ostrobothnia, Vasa offered exceptional guarantees for the safety of the Finnish command in the character of its own population, and in that of the surrounding districts.

The day chosen for the departure for Vasa was January 18th. Gustaf Mannerheim was accompanied by four officers, and for all forged passports had to be provided, the one for the Commander-in-Chief being in the name of Malmberg. Every kind of other precaution had to be taken, since Gustaf Mannerheim had noticed that he was being shadowed by Red detectives: he therefore did not proceed direct to the station from his apartment, but first shook off his pursuers by calling on a friend, and then walked to the station. Meanwhile, his luggage had been carried by his Ulan orderly to a hotel close to the station, and the hotel staff then saw to it that it reached the train. The party travelled by sleeping-car, and on their arrival at Tammerfors a dramatic episode occurred which, variously related, I give here in the words of Gustaf Mannerheim, when once describing it to me himself.

"I was asleep in my berth when a patrol of Russian soldiers, sent to examine our passports, knocked at the door. Waking up, I half-unconsciously uttered a few words in Russian, which created a suspicion that I was a Russian officer: so I was ordered to get up at once to be further questioned. I had with me in a portfolio a number of important documents concerning the army: and these had at all costs to be saved. Remarking that I was not accustomed to dressing in public,

I drew the curtain across the glass door, and, unseen, handed the portfolio to the officer who was sleeping in the berth above me; then dressed and went out to meet the patrol. Things looked decidedly uncomfortable, when all of a sudden there turned up a little fellow, wearing a uniform cap, who ordered the patrol not to bother about me, saying: 'This man is all right.' I was free to resume my journey." The story illustrates well the risks of the time and the presence of mind of the narrator; and as for the 'little fellow wearing a uniform cap,' his identity has to this day remained a mystery.

When next Gustaf Mannerheim came to Tammerfors, it was under rather different auspices, as will be set out in due course.

At Östermyra station there was a change of trains; and at a subsequent station, the party of officers went to the refreshment room to have a cup of morning coffee. On their returning to their compartment, they found that their seats had been commandeered by some Russian soldiers, who carried out a violent flirtation with women sitting in their laps. Requests to vacate their seats only drew violent answers, and in the circumstances there was nothing for it but to submit. Under such conditions did the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish army in January, 1918, reach his G.H.Q.

At Vasa, there now began a period of intense activity. Foundations were to be laid for the organization of the entire Finnish army, and contacts established with the Defence Corps all over the country. Work started in the morning at eight o'clock and usually went on until one o'clock at night. For dinner, one hour was set aside, while sandwiches brought from a restaurant did duty for luncheon. The post of Chief of Staff was temporarily assigned to Colonel Wetzer, another Finnish officer who had seen service in the Russian army during the Great War; while Captain Ignatius, brother of the Finnish delegate in America, became Quartermaster-General. The official residence of the Provincial Governor at Vasa was placed at the disposal of the G.H.Q.; and the

correspondence of the latter was carried on under the address of the municipality of Vasa. All this work was done under the very nose of the Russian garrison at Vasa, whose excesses were never-ending ; and there were continuous rumours that the Russians planned a descent on Gustaf Mannerheim and his staff. It is an illustration of the conditions prevailing, that several of the officers both here and elsewhere in Finland were forced to adopt false names in order to protect the members of their families at their respective homes against reprisals.

We will leave for a moment the newly installed G.H.Q. attending to its urgent tasks ; and briefly survey the development of the situation in Finland since the proclamation of her independence on December 6th.

The presence of the masses of undisciplined Russian soldiers in Finland was obviously one of the primary causes of the lawlessness and disorder in the country ; and after Finland had declared her independence, there was something utterly anomalous in the fact that Russian troops remained on Finnish territory at all. The Svinhufvud Cabinet therefore regarded it as one of its most pressing tasks to come to an arrangement with the Russian authorities under which the Russian troops would be withdrawn from Finland. An endless series of negotiations with this end in view was consequently started early in the life of the new Government : but no headway was ever made. The Soviet Government had not the slightest intention of ordering the evacuation of Finland by her forces ; and the Socialist Party in Finland strained every effort to make them stay, and help in building up the strength of the Red Guards.

Whenever the Socialist members of the Diet scented an attempt to place the Government in control of the situation, they offered the most determined opposition and obstruction to the measure proposed. Their resentment was, in particular, aroused when a member of the majority, Antti Mikkola, brought in a motion that a Finnish army be set up. This was fought tooth and nail, and the measure never emerged

from the Standing Committee to which it had been referred ; but the fact that this initiative was Antti Mikkola's was not forgotten, and he was before long to experience what it meant in the Finland of those days to have challenged the vindictiveness of the Reds.

Murder and plunder meanwhile went on in large parts of Finland without there being any possibility of the Government putting an end to the anarchy : and one of the worst excesses in the history of the Red Terror so far was that which occurred at Åbo about the middle of December. During the general strike in November, the local Red Guard had jockeyed itself into a position of absolute power in the unfortunate city, throwing the Provincial Governor and the Chief of Police into prison, and exacting from the Town Council a sum of half a million marks for the ' maintenance of order.' The Red Guards then proceeded to demand that the Government should sanction the existing arrangements, and moreover appoint the nominees of the Reds to the posts of Provincial Governor and Chief of Police. In the negotiations which followed, the Government tried to combine conciliation with firmness : but the Reds brusquely declared that if their demands (which also included increased pay) were not granted, the Revolutionary Committee would proceed to take such measures as were within their power. Right enough, on the night of December 17th, a rabble of hooligans and Russian soldiers and sailors, evidently at the instigation of the powers in control, collected in the chief street of the city, and proceeded on a tour of destruction, smashing the shop windows and pillaging right and left. This went on for a couple of days, and some semblance of order was only restored after the foreign Consuls in Åbo had asked the Ukrainian troops, stationed in the city, to intervene and put a stop to the disorders : thus the help of the very forces had to be invoked, of which the majority of the population, for other reasons, was eagerly desirous of seeing the last, even when they, like the Ukrainians, represented a better element than the generality of the Russian troops.

The matter was immediately raised in the Diet, and the Prime Minister took the opportunity of addressing a solemn warning to the country, pointing out that no government was possible where order did not exist ; and that the maintenance of order at that very moment was essential, as otherwise Finland's right to independent existence might fairly be questioned by the foreign Powers. And on the same day—it was December 20th—the Government—as yet, be it remembered, unrecognized by any foreign power—addressed a demand to Great Britain, France, and the United States for help to secure the withdrawal of the Russian troops.

The question of strengthening the hands of the Government came up again in the Diet on January 9th, when the Minister of the Interior submitted a Bill authorizing the Government to take all steps *it considered necessary in order to create an effective force for the defence of order throughout the country*. Gone was now the unanimity with which the Diet the day before had cheered the independence of Finland : the new Bill released an absolute hurricane of abuse on the part of the Socialists. In hysterical terms the Government was stigmatized for declaring war on its own people ; and when the Prime Minister made a vigorous but dignified defence of the ideas underlying the Bill, an absolute pandemonium broke out, and the sitting had to be suspended. In the end, the Bill was adopted with 97 votes against 87 : and again there were violent scenes as the Socialist deputies hurled every conceivable epithet at the majority. It will be noticed that the scope of the Bill was set out in very generic terms : and this enabled the Government, once it was passed, to proclaim that the voluntary Defence Corps now coming into being all over Finland were the official ' force for the defence of order ' contemplated by the Bill. The action of the Red Guard had in the meantime disclosed the fullest determination to force the issue. In Helsingfors, it already on January 8th forcibly seized one of the principal Government buildings and installed itself there ; and after the Diet on January 13th had passed the Bill regarding the Government

Defence of Order Force, the Executive of the Socialist Party on January 15th appealed to the proletariat to gather its forces against the Government which was 'planning to attack the working class with butcher forces,' and had by the Diet been given authority to establish 'a dictatorship of violence.' This menace, the manifesto continued, left the working men no choice but to strengthen their troops.

Tension throughout Finland was growing. Already during Christmas it had come to a clash of arms—fortunately of no great importance—between a local defence corps in Ostrobothnia and a Russian force, which had tried to arrest the leader of the former. Now matters came to a breaking-point in another part of Finland, namely Carelia.

It is characteristic of the mentality of the Russian troops stationed in Finland, that while they officially sided with the revolution, they were only too eager to make money on the sly by selling arms to the defence corps. In Wiborg, a quantity of Japanese rifles had changed hands in this fashion; whereupon the vendors double-crossed the buyers by informing the local Red Guard that rifles belonging to the defence corps were stacked away in such and such a place. The storehouse was, in consequence, on January 19th attacked by a mixed force of Finnish Reds and Russian soldiers; the small detachment of Defence Corps men, set to guard the arms, were overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers; and Reds and Russians acting in unison then proceeded to establish a reign of terror in the city. A summons now went out to all the Defence Corps of Carelia to come to the assistance of the capital of the Province. This was readily obeyed, and, from all quarters, detachments of peasants—poorly equipped, but determined to resist the Red tyranny—converged on Wiborg. This happened on January 22nd: but hopelessly outclassed by the Russian garrison and the Red Guard, these detachments soon had to withdraw across the ice to an island in the Bay of Wiborg. Meanwhile, the spirit of opposition had been roused in the Carelians: so on January 23rd the local Defence Corps of the small town of Sordavala, on Lake Ladoga, by a bold

stroke overpowered the Russian garrison—the first Russian garrison to suffer this fate in Finland—and in rapid sequence similar *coups* were carried out in the town of Joensuu, in the important railway junction St. Andreae, on the river Vuoksen, and in Vuoksenniska, where the river in question issues from Lake Saimen. In the latter place the men of the Defence Corps, though hardly armed at all, captured their first guns from the Russians—on January 26th. On the same day the Carelian detachments, marooned in the Bay of Wiborg, managed to break their way through, and join their comrades-in-arms at St. Andreae. The beginnings of a war front had been created.

This resolute action on the part of the Carelian Defence Corps aroused intense anger both on the part of the Russian authorities and the Red Guards. Their remonstrances were, of course, purely hypocritical; and in this connexion it is of interest to record that as far back as January 13th, the Staff of the Red Guard in Helsingfors put it down in their minutes ‘that Lenin had officially promised the Guard 10,000 rifles and all arms contained in the arsenals in Finland, gratis, so that the question of payment could be settled only *if the workers won and seized power*.’ Also, on January 23rd, Lenin’s Commissary for War, Podvoisky, had issued an order to the Russian troops in Finland to disarm the Defence Corps.

On the evening of January 24th M. Svinhufvud was rung up by the Chairman of the Committee of Russian Sailors, Ismailov, and requested to meet the Russian Staff on board the steamer *Kretshet*, lying in the icebound harbour of Helsingfors: he was to attend in order to offer explanations of recent happenings, both in Carelia and in Ostrobothnia, whence alarming news was beginning to reach the Russians. To take part in a conference of this character meant no small risk to life and limb, as the countless murders by Russian soldiers and sailors testified: but M. Svinhufvud was not to be deterred. He proceeded, alone, across the ice to the steamer, clambered up its side, and began his negotiations with the unruly crowd which had assembled—his exile in Siberia had made M. Svinhufvud

into a tolerable Russian scholar. The discussions followed an endlessly meandering course, the Russians occasionally getting very excited : as the night wore on, there were fresh arrivals—a Finnish Government official, sent to see if he could rescue M. Svinhufvud, two of the Finnish Red leaders, later still the Minister of the Interior, and so on. The Russians were indulging in heavy drinking and the air in the conference room was impenetrably thick with tobacco smoke : at one moment, M. Svinhufvud and his friends, despairing of reaching any result, tried to leave the ship, but were stopped. This looked ominous indeed, but there was nothing for it but to go on discussing : at long last, agreement was reached and a document was set up and signed, in which both parties bound themselves to refrain from any action which was likely to lead to a breach of the peace. Then only, at four o'clock in the morning, were M. Svinhufvud and his friends allowed to return to Helsingfors, after an experience trying even to men with nerves of steel, and strikingly symptomatic of the state of helplessness in which the Finnish Government found itself.

On the next day, January 25th, the negotiations with the Russians were resumed, without leading to any result : the Government was, of course, fully prepared for this, but felt that these negotiations fulfilled a useful purpose in gaining time for military preparations to be pushed on in Ostrobothnia. An important Government decision was, however, reached on that day : namely, to inform the competent Finnish authorities that the ' Defence Corps generally called the White Guards ' were the armed force of the Government. By midnight, the members of the Government proceeded to the sitting of the Diet, where, arising from a manœuvre of the Socialists to engineer a vote of no confidence in the Government, the date of the next sitting was being discussed. It was fixed for Monday, January 28th, not for Saturday the 26th, as the Socialists had wished : but that meeting never took place. The Socialists saw to that.

Late at night, after the Diet had concluded its deliberations, the Government decided upon issuing an appeal to the

Finnish nation to unite in defence of her liberty. In spite of the advanced hour, the appeal was prepared there and then and appeared in all non-Socialist papers the next morning. It began by stressing the essentially democratic structure of the Finnish State, condemned the attempts at revolution and the fraternizing with the Russian troops, and concluded :

‘The distress of our country forces us to appeal to you all. We hope that every Finnish citizen at the present moment is prepared to make the sacrifices that the threatened position of our country and our people can demand of everyone individually, and all jointly. The aim of the common effort of all must solely be the maintenance of civic peace. Under no circumstances can provocative acts or reprisals be tolerated, nor any individual measures conflicting with the decisions of those charged with the maintenance of order.

‘Citizens! Unite for the purpose of protecting jointly the peace of your homes, the lives, property, personal liberty, and intangibleness of those near to you. The maintenance of order is a defence of the independence of the Finnish people and of its future.’

Later in the day, January 26th, when this appeal was published, the official Socialist newspaper in Helsingfors brought an appeal to the ‘organized workers of Finland,’ signed by the General Staff of the Red Guards, and a body calling itself the Executive Committee, composed of extremists who now gained control of the Socialist Party. Its President was one Eero Haapalainen, a fanatical revolutionary, utterly Bohemian in his habits, and of no stature at all as a politician. This appeal broadly hinted at the nature of events that were about to take place, ending up : ‘Comrades ! Now stand shoulder to shoulder ! Close the ranks ! Be prepared !’

Nobody could doubt after this that a revolutionary *coup d'état* was imminent ; and as the Government possessed no armed forces in Helsingfors capable of making a resistance, the question arose as to the steps which should be taken in

order to safeguard the survival of the legal Government. The question was debated at considerable length in the course of Saturday, January 26th : and eventually it was decided that three ministers were to leave that very night for Vasa. The number of three was chosen, since there existed a regulation permitting precisely that minimum number of ministers to make decisions, in cases of emergency, if they were unanimous.

The journey of the three ministers to Vasa proved a most adventurous enterprise : they only caught the night train for the north in the nick of time, and long ran the most imminent risk of being intercepted and captured. Indeed, a warning conveyed to them soon after they had started compelled them to leave the train at Lembois station, with three-quarters of their journey still before them, and continue across country as best they could. Eventually they were able to re-join the railway at a point further to the north, and having negotiated several danger zones were hoping to reach Vasa without further complications, when in the middle of the night, between Sunday and Monday, the train suddenly left its rails. This was due to action on the part of the Government forces operating in the district, who thought that the train was carrying reinforcements to the Russian troops at Vasa. The mistake was discovered at the last moment, and thanks to the heroic action of the guard and stoker, who both were killed, the untoward consequences of the accident were otherwise reduced to a minimum. After further delay, the three ministers resumed their journey and reached Vasa in the early morning of Tuesday, January 29th. A fourth colleague managed to join them from the provinces a couple of days later : and thus was constituted the ' Vasa Government,' which for the next two or three months functioned as the supreme legal authority in Finland.

Sunday, January 27th, was a busy day for those members of the Government who had remained in Helsingfors. Most of them had spent the night at their secret meeting-place, since it was obvious that the Reds were planning to arrest them ; and early on Sunday morning, the Finnish representa-

tive in St. Petersburg managed to inform them by telephone that the Russian Commissar for War, Podvoisky, after difficult negotiations had issued an order to the effect that the Russian troops in Finland were to maintain a neutral attitude during the internal conflict in Finland. Important as this looked on the face of it, the issuing of the order was, however, obviously just a manœuvre: besides, the order was never obeyed, and the Finnish Reds were, meanwhile, with the Russian support, continuing their warlike preparations with the utmost energy. Consultations between the Government and leading politicians went on all day, and the appointment of Gustaf Mannerheim was now confirmed in writing.

During the night between Saturday and Sunday, there had been a continuous stream of transport columns from the Russian arsenal outside Helsingfors, bringing arms to the Reds. On the Sunday a mobilization order was issued to the Red Guards in the capital and analogous instructions were sent to the organizations in the provinces. A 'Revolutionary message to the Finnish People,' signed by Haapalainen, was published: it anticipated events by saying that the working men of the capital already *had* taken action; and it provided a true pattern-piece of revolutionary logic—since the Diet incontestably represented the majority of the Finnish people—by proclaiming that 'the headquarters of the dark powers of the *minority*' had been swept away. The 'Butcher Government has been robbed of its powers' the proclamation went on to say, letting it further be known that 'the armed supporters of the dispossessed Government may be slain without mercy.'

Monday, January 28th, saw the carrying out of the actual *coup d'état*. Early in the morning, the different detachments of the Red Guard were moved from the suburbs to the centre of Helsingfors, where the Government buildings were seized. There was no resistance, for—as already remarked—the organization of the Helsingfors Defence Corps was at that time still only in its beginnings, and to have attempted a fight would only have meant annihilation. M. Svinhufvud did want in the morning to brave the revolutionaries and proceed to

his office at the Senate House ; but this suicidal intention was soon given up. Hospitality was extended to him and two of the other ministers at the apartment of a widowed lady, Madame Runeberg, in the heart of Helsingfors ; and from here a number of Government decrees were issued during the next few days. Notably, all Government officials—with a few essential exceptions—were instructed to discontinue their activities. The banks, too, ceased to function immediately ; and the public press—except, of course, the official Socialist newspaper—was muzzled.

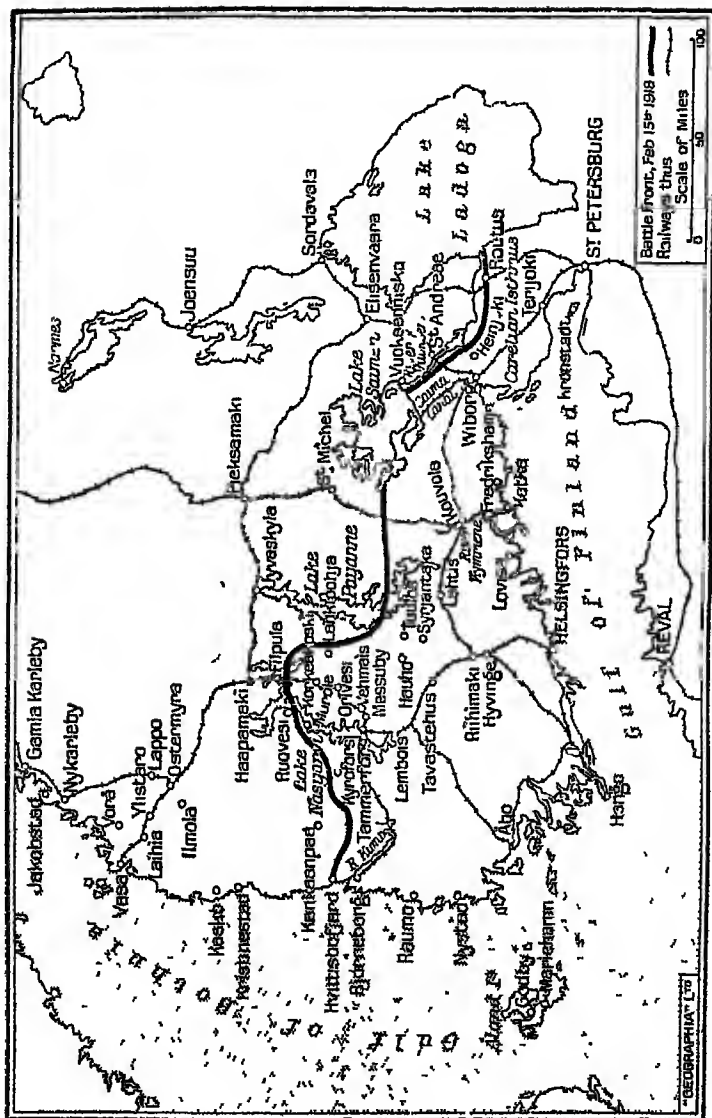
There had been a great deal of indiscriminate shooting in the streets of Helsingfors during Monday and the ensuing night ; and Tuesday the 29th brought news about the ‘constructive’ side of the revolution. After the Soviet model, a ‘People’s Commissariat for Finland’ was instituted, comprising thirteen members. It was presided over by Kullervo Manner. Foreign Affairs went to Yrjö Sirola, and Public Education to a man who was to reappear, as a sinister figure from the past, at a later stage of Finnish history—Otto Kuusinen.

Following the lead given by the capital, the revolution was proclaimed in the greater part of southern Finland, notably in all the larger cities of the country—Wiborg, Tammerfors, Abo. And soon, harrowing tales of murders, atrocities, and wilful destruction began to fly from mouth to mouth. The members of the Government and loyal officials whatever their social status—law-abiding police constables, for instance—were tracked like wild animals. To some extent, there was complete aimlessness in the massacres : but the long-harboured vendetta was not unknown either. One of the first more prominent victims of the Red Terror after the revolution was Antti Mikkola, the member of the Diet who, it will be recalled, early in December had proposed the setting up of a Finnish army. This had never been forgotten by the Reds : and having, quite early in the rebellion, succeeded in arresting him, they took him out of prison in the night and murdered him in cold blood.

None of the six members of the Government who remained in Red Finland was ever run to earth, though they had more than one narrow escape. But for weeks to come they had to watch, powerless, the growing anarchy from their secret hiding-places, few of which were safe for long.

In Vasa, Gustaf Mannerheim had meanwhile pushed on with the organization of his forces as fast as he could. It was a race against time, for the Russians and the Reds combined might launch a military attack in proper form at any moment. Little wonder, therefore, that the Commander-in-Chief urged the Government to try to gain as much time as possible: and the bold and successful stroke in Carelia, between January 23rd and 26th, undertaken spontaneously by the local White forces, was really at the time, from the general strategic point of view, an added complication.

In Southern Ostrobothnia the peasant formations were burning with eagerness to enter the fray and deliver at long last a vigorous blow at the hated Russians. Excitement grew still further when it was learnt, on January 21st, that a Russian troop train was on its way from the south; and the White forces in the district of Lappo, some forty miles east of Vasa, were quickly summoned by the local leaders for the purpose of taking appropriate counter-measures. Having completed their first concentration, in the village of Lappo, the peasant troops proceeded to elect a commander, and found him in the person of Matti Laurila, a Lappo farmer, who years before had served as a N.C.O. in the Finnish Guards at Helsingfors. Immediate action was demanded, the troops murmuring 'if the gentry are not with us, we, the rank and file, will act on our own.' Gustaf Mannerheim immediately recognized the risks inherent in the premature action demanded: he therefore sent orders, vetoing the enterprise. These were, however, very badly received, and though in the end the troops obeyed them, it was with considerable restiveness. As a salutary warning to the Russian garrison, Matti Laurila then marched his troops through the village



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of Lappo, in military formation ; and himself proceeded to Vasa, where he called upon the Commander-in-Chief and, with the frankness of the Ostrobothnian yeoman, entered his protest against the order that had been given. Gustaf Mannerheim quite calmly and objectively set out the reasons which had dictated the measure, and ended up with an appeal to his interlocutor's military experience :

" We two old soldiers must surely understand that in war-time there may be issued orders with which the rank and file have difficulty in complying, but which have to be obeyed."

The General had spoken straight to the yeoman's heart ; a handshake followed, and Matti Laurila returned to his native village entirely Mannerheim's man. The episode is a classic instance of Gustaf Mannerheim's way of securing the complete confidence of those whom he was leading.

A summons had gone out to all former Finnish officers who were available to report to the G.H.Q. at Vasa ; and, moreover, before striking, the Commander-in-Chief was anxious for the return of the Jaeger battalion from Libau at the earliest possible moment, and for a speeding-up and increase of the supply of arms purchased from Germany—questions which had latterly formed the subject of difficult negotiations between the Finnish and the German authorities. However, there were obvious reasons for taking action as quickly as possible, and on January 25th, notably impressed by the *Kretshet* episode in Helsingfors the day before, Gustaf Mannerheim called a Council of War to settle the question when hostilities should begin. The Council was attended by Captain Ignatius, Colonel Wetzler, and Major-General Löfström ; the latter, yet another Finnish officer with important experience from the World War, who had recently arrived at Vasa. He was the only one who on that occasion pleaded for delay, adducing the weighty reasons which could be urged against an initiative at this stage ; whereas the Commander-in-Chief favoured immediate action, and had the support of the two remaining officers. As a result, Gustaf

Mannerheim now issued an order to attack on Monday, January 28th, and speaking over the telephone to M. Svinhufvud on Saturday evening, he was given full freedom to act as he thought best.

There was a hint of a last-minute hitch when on Sunday there arrived a telegram reporting Podvoiski's order to the Russian troops to observe neutrality during the conflict in Finland. Gustaf Mannerheim's reaction was characteristic : "I remembered the fierce words of old Laurila," he has himself related, "so I put the telegram into my pocket without telling anybody except Ignatius. Thus operations were started at the most opportune moment." Indeed, the fact that the initiative in Ostrobothnia came to coincide exactly with the Red *coup d'état* in Helsingfors was of incalculable importance : a day's delay would have meant that the Russians in Ostrobothnia would have taken heart and doubtless proceeded to arrests and attacks, whereby the whole advantage of surprise would have been lost to the Whites.

The localities ordered to be captured on the 28th were, for one thing, Vasa itself, and, moreover, a number of large, straggling villages on the snow-clad Ostrobothnian plain, the whole within a radius of rather more than forty miles from Vasa. Success would secure control of the important railway line linking up Vasa with Östermyra on the main line connecting north and south Finland.

Hostilities actually commenced on Sunday evening, January 27th, when the local defence corps attacked the small Russian garrison at Laihia, on the Vasa-Östermyra line. There was some resistance on the part of the Russians, who inflicted some casualties on the Finns before they were disarmed. At Lappo things went more smoothly ; proceeding to attack at 2 a.m. on Monday morning, the White forces surprised in their sleep the four hundred Russians stationed here. Surrender followed immediately, and the arms of the Russians now went to complete the equipment of their attackers. This is a characteristic feature of several of the early engagements in this war ; the initiative was taken by poorly equipped, but

brave men, who, in effect, got their arms by wresting them from the enemy.

The victors at Lappo now proceeded by train to Östermyra, arriving at 5 a.m. whilst it was still dark. Here the 423rd Luga Regiment was stationed, one of the few Russian regiments which still maintained a standard of relative military efficiency. Nevertheless, it was completely surprised, and having surrendered, was sent by train to Vasa. A very large booty here fell into the hands of the Finns.

At Ylistaro, on the Vasa-Östermyra line, there was but little resistance on the part of the garrison of about four hundred Russians, and this was perhaps just as well, seeing that the local defence corps in part had no better arms than axes, scythes, and stakes; they had, however, the support of the pupils of a military school in the neighbourhood newly established in the village of Vörå. Here, incidentally, the three ministers, travelling from Helsingfors to Vasa, caught their first glimpse of the victorious peasant army of Ostrobothnia.

The most important operation of the day was, however, obviously the one directed against Vasa. The Russian garrison here consisted of some 1,500 to 2,000 men abundantly supplied with arms and ammunition. The preparations on the spot for the *coup* on the 28th inevitably met with enormous difficulties: but they were carried out with great thoroughness, and the position was once again carefully reconnoitred in the course of Sunday. The command of the whole operation was given to one of Gustaf Mannerheim's most trusted and experienced officers, Colonel Wetzor, who was actually responsible for the plan drawn up for the operation.

Action was to begin in the dark of the winter night, at 3 a.m. on Monday. At nightfall on Sunday the peasant troops of the neighbourhood silently marched into Vasa and took up their appointed positions; at midnight the telephones of the Russian troops were disconnected, the Vasa exchange having been occupied by operators acting upon the instructions issued by the White forces. These were hours of

indescribable suspense: the little city lay silent under the starlit sky, but everywhere in it determined men were awake and on the *qui vive*, ready to act the moment the signal was given.

No sooner had the last of the three eagerly awaited strokes reverberated over Vasa from the belfry than a first shot was heard from across the frozen bay, where a strong Russian detachment was stationed in the suburb of Brändö; and immediately afterwards the macabre chorus of the machine-guns set in. Certainly, the secret of the impending attack had been well kept; the Russians were taken completely by surprise, and upon most points there was little or no resistance. The detachment in the naval barracks, for example, surrendered, after one single hand-grenade had been flung into the building occupied by them. Or else there would be the most wasteful and ineffectual use of ammunition: the machine-guns of the Brändö detachment fired something like 8,000 rounds without securing a single hit.

By seven o'clock in the morning, before the grey dawn of the winter day, the Whites were masters of the situation. The Russians had surrendered upon all points, though their main force, in the centre of the city, was still holding out and returned a defiant answer when asked to lay down its arms. The White forces were, therefore, concentrated upon this point, and a couple of guns, captured from the Russians in the earlier fighting, were brought up and placed in position. This had the desired effect, and shortly before three o'clock the last Russian force in Vasa capitulated.

The White forces engaged in this affair amounted to something like two thousand, but their training had, of course, been very sketchy, and their equipment only began to be worth talking about after they had seized the arms of the enemy. The success of the Finns was essentially due to superior leadership. Of individual courage, there were many instances. Thus a Jaeger, A. Stenholm—for a few individual members of the legendary battalion were already serving in Finland—in the course of the morning captured eleven

Russians at one stroke and single-handed. The men had been set to keep watch over the Russian wireless apparatus, which in this way fell undamaged into the hands of the Finns and henceforth was of the utmost value to them. Earlier in the day the Commander of the Russian fleet in the Gulf of Bothnia had been wirelessly desperate messages to Helsingfors regarding 'five to ten thousand White Guards' who 'surrounded all the barracks of our detachments with superior forces.' A further message conveyed the news that the Executive Committee of the Russian forces in Vasa had been arrested, and ended up: 'I am now expecting to be arrested myself.' Dramatically, a message from a Finnish operator closes the series. 'He is already under arrest. This is the last telegram. OPERATOR ON DUTY.'

The example set by these operations led to immediate action and success on that very day, even in localities not mentioned in the Commander-in-Chief's first order of attack. Thus, already on the 28th, two further cities on the icebound Gulf of Bothnia, north of Vasa, were captured: Nykarleby and Jakobstad; in the latter city, the birthplace of Finland's national poet, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, the Russian garrison resisted for a couple of hours before surrendering.

At Ilmola—a large village south-east of Vasa, which figured on the first order of attack—a characteristic episode occurred. The Russian position here was one of considerable strength, and the Finnish officer in command of the attacking force, Colonel Berg, thought it advisable to try to achieve his aim by means of negotiations. These were spun out all through Monday and well into Tuesday, when the Lappo men, headed as before by old Matti Laurila, appeared on the scene. Immediate action was demanded by them, but Colonel Berg was not to be rushed: he still held the way of negotiation to be the better one. Colonel Berg, was, however, not General Mannerheim, nor had he the General's gifts of diplomacy; so, fuming with indignation, the Lappo men went on to Östermyra, whence they were soon to continue on the warpath, occasionally securing important military

objectives through their rush tactics. Colonel Berg having meanwhile received reinforcements, including eight machine-guns, and after these had been placed in position where they dominated the Russian artillery, the Ilmola garrison, too, surrendered. On the same day—January 29th—yet another coast town north of Vasa, Gamla Karleby, was captured—the northernmost point so far reached in the campaign. The White writ now ran, after two days of operations, in a territory roughly 75 miles long and 45 miles wide.

And wherever that writ ran, there was now enthusiasm and readiness to sacrifice which knew no bounds. Everybody, high and low, was willing to help; the fisherman from the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia was equally lavish with the fruits of his toil as the farmer on the fertile plains of Ostrobothnia with his. The Commissariat could get all it wanted, only no pay would be accepted. Eagerness to join up was phenomenal: from old men of seventy to boys who had barely reached their teens, everyone wanted to be in the ranks of the White army. It sometimes came to cases of curious bargaining, as when an old fisherman pleaded with his son of man's estate in the inimitable Swedish vernacular of those parts: "I am sixty-five, and here I have waited all these years to have a chance of fighting the Russian: so now I join up and you stay at home. But remember, boy, that if I fall, then you must go and avenge my death."

Of all provinces of Finland, Ostrobothnia is perhaps the most truly democratic one in spirit. A landed aristocracy is almost unknown there; but her yeomanry—as mentioned once before—has since time immemorial been known for its bravery and passion for freedom. Naturally, there had been some infiltration of Socialism into these parts of Finland as well; but the action of the Finnish Red of 1918 in joining forces with his country's enemy was anathema to the average Ostrobothnian. The latter is, however, not given to rhetoric; and the wave of intense patriotic sentiment, on which everyone, man and woman, was swept away, remained unaccompanied by any demonstrative exhibitionism. One and all

worked their hardest ; their hearts were full, but they talked little. In one section of the population a definite leaven of religious sentiment was present. Ostrobothnia is the home of the most austere and earnest sect in Finland, known as the pietists ; and Gustaf Mannerheim has once recorded the profound impression received by him on seeing a troop of such men, singing hymns as they were proceeding on skis to meet the enemy in battle.

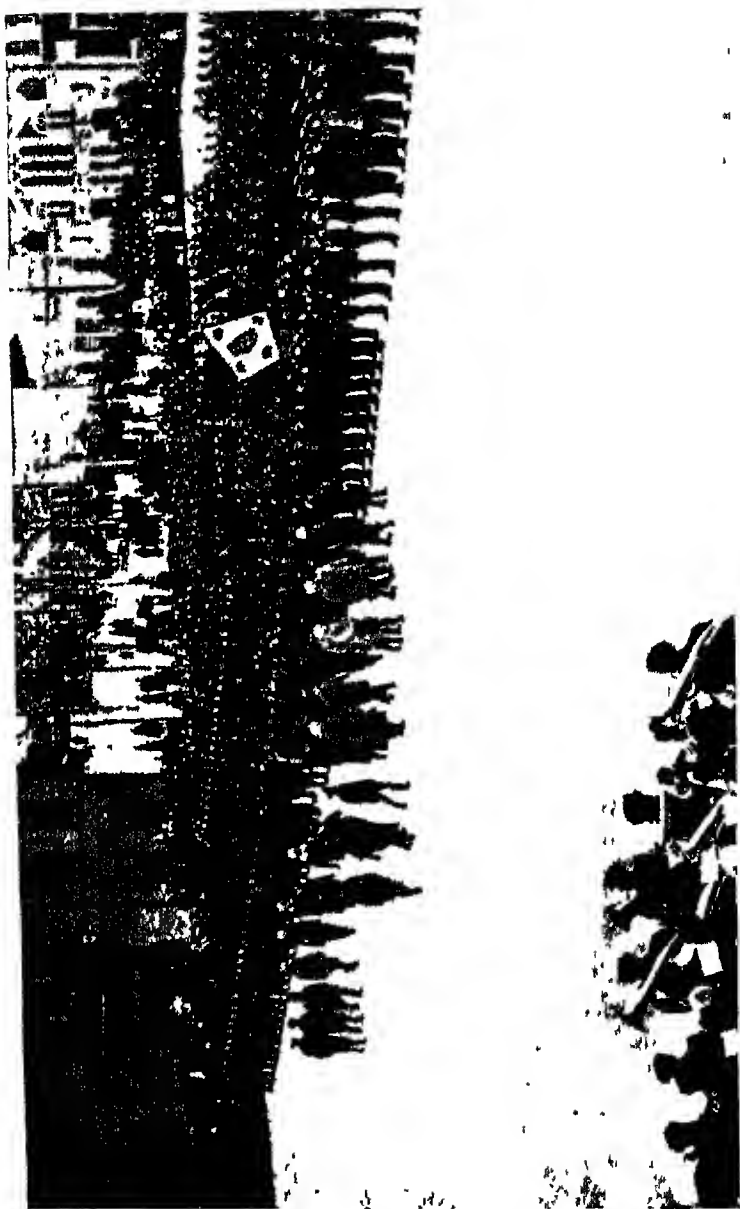
There always comes a particular warmth of expression into Gustaf Mannerheim's voice when he talks of his memories of those Vasa days : and the sympathy which then sprang up between him and the yeomen of Ostrobothnia was certainly a mutual one. He quickly won their trust ; and he quickly learnt how fully he could trust them. This was an invaluable asset during operations which, though to the seasoned General—fresh from the gigantic struggles of the World War—they might in proportion have suggested something like a return to the snowball fights between the upper and the lower form, yet had a bearing on issues which were of far-reaching importance. A very notable asset, too, for the Finnish Commander-in-Chief was the fact that his years of service in the Russian army had given him the fullest possible understanding of the Russian soldier ; he therefore knew, to a nicety, how far he could go in a campaign which—as witness General Löfström's reaction—was undertaken in defiance of all rules of military orthodoxy. Most important of all, however, was the presence in Gustaf Mannerheim of all the essential characteristics of the true strategist—the imperturbableness, the sense of relative values, the gift of striking where the blow was least expected.

Finland was not to wait long for the news of the first victories in the campaign upon which her destiny hung. The message was given the form of a proclamation by the Commander-in-Chief, entrusted to the telegraph on January 29th, and it ran :

‘ The outrages, pillaging, and murders committed among the peaceful population by the lowest elements of the



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM IN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE
(From the picture by Lero Järnefelt)



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM REVIEWS THE JAEGERS ON THEIR ARRIVAL AT VASA, FEBRUARY 26TH, 1918

community, together with the Russian soldiers, among which outrages especially the events at Wiborg have aroused the fierce indignation of the liberty-loving peasants of Ostrobothnia, have obliged me to disarm the Russian troops at Vasa, Lappo, Ylistaro, Östermyra, Jakobstad, Gamla Karleby, and other places.

‘If the Red Guards do not submit to the lawful Government, the exasperated peasant troops of this country will be obliged with arms in hand to pass judgment on the traitors.

‘A guarantee of personal safety is given to the 5,000 disarmed Russian soldiers, and they will be set free as soon as an arrangement to this effect has been come to between Finland and Russia.

‘The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Corps,

‘GENERAL MANNERHEIM.’

Over the telegraph wires this message went to every city in Finland, even to those which had been seized by the Reds: the news it brought spread like wild-fire, and buoyed up people's hearts with courage and faith reborn, where until then there had been nothing but despair; or else—to the enemies of society—it read like the writing on the wall. The name which concluded the proclamation was, as yet, known but to relatively few, but it assumed in an instant a symbolical significance. ‘Mannerheim,’ writes a witness from the very heart of Finland, ‘Mannerheim, that very name gave one such a marvellous sense of security, and it impressed itself on one's memory as if written in golden letters. One felt that behind this name there stood a man whom God Himself had chosen to be the saviour and leader of our people in this its hour of direct distress.’ And one among the many fretting at Helsingfors writes of the new figure which had so suddenly appeared on the scene: ‘It is difficult to describe the rejoicings called forth by his first bulletin—secretly spread through Helsingfors—among all who had studied the revolutionary appeal of the Reds with disgust and regarded the

shooting gangs in the streets with horror. There was a new note in Mannerheim's telegram, a note of hope and confidence in the sound core of the people, which opened up a perspective undreamt of.'

In recounting the feats of arms of Ostrobothnia's peasant army, on the very day when it began its campaign, one's thoughts instinctively go to similar enterprises in the past. Not so different can have been the feelings of the heroic peasants of the Vendée, when, on a March day in 1793, they captured the city of Cholet, putting to flight their oppressors, and they, too, getting their arms from the enemy; or the feelings of the brave and hardy mountaineers of Navarre, the Basque provinces, and Alava who had fought and conquered, in May, 1873, under the banner of Don Carlos, on the field of Eraul. . . . But this time the cause was going to win.

CHAPTER VI

THE LIBERATION OF NORTHERN FINLAND. THE SWEDISH GOVERNMENT AND THE NYSTAD CORPS. GUSTAF MANNERHEIM'S OPPOSITION TO GERMAN INTERVENTION. NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE JAEGER. THE CAPTURE OF TAMMERFORS.

THE quick initial successes in southern Ostrobothnia, won in a couple of days, were equally quickly followed up.

The last two days of January saw the taking of two further coast towns, both south of Vasa, namely Kaskö and Kristinestad: the latter was not captured until there had been some hard fighting, and this was due to the presence at Kristinestad of a Red Guard, better organized and more martial in spirit than in any of the other places that the campaign had reached until then. With the fall of Kristinestad, however, the whole of southern Ostrobothnia was now White.

After this, the problem of northern Ostrobothnia, and of the districts still further north, urgently demanded attention. This was a territory of vast extent, containing also some urban centres of importance, with considerable Russian garrisons; but special and obvious significance attached to it because the whole of Finland's land frontier towards Sweden falls within the territory in question—the province of Uleåborg.

Politically, the province of Uleåborg was, however, not such plain sailing as the province of Vasa. The average native was patriotic enough, but the war years had brought into those parts a considerable floating population, of which again the fortification workers formed an important section; and among this floating population, the teaching of the Red Guards

had found many adepts. The campaign in northern Finland, though brief and wholly successful, was yet to bring this circumstance into relief; and difficulties were also increased by the fact that in northern Ostrobothnia, the organization of the White forces at the time was even more in its beginnings than in southern Ostrobothnia.

A *comp*, designed to carry Uleåborg on January 30th by surprise, the way Vasa had been carried, was very nearly brought off, so far as the Russian garrison of about 1,000 men was concerned; but then the local Reds intervened, and from having been the attackers, the weak White forces found themselves the attacked. Bitter fighting ensued on February 2nd, the Whites holding out bravely against great odds. Their position was, however, precarious in the extreme, when next morning reinforcements sent by the Commander-in-Chief arrived on the scene. Further heavy fighting ended in the complete victory of the Whites.

Red resistance had also on other points delayed progress in northern Finland; but the picture was now rapidly changing. There remained, however, one all-important point to be secured—the frontier city of Torneå, the terminus of the railway line along the Gulf of Bothnia. This was captured on February 7th, following upon a bold attack by a small Finnish force upon the strong Russian garrison. Not only was the rear of the Finnish army as a result made completely safe, but direct contact with Sweden was thereby secured, opening up valuable possibilities for the arrival of supplies and men.

Mopping-up operations in the remainder of northern Finland claimed relatively little time; and before long Gustaf Mannerheim saw himself in control of territory extending far beyond the Arctic Circle—in terms of surface measurement, indeed, more than half of Finland. But it was not in that part of Finland that the final decision as to her fate was going to be reached.

Right from the beginning, the Commander-in-Chief had kept a close watch on strategic possibilities and necessities

south of the positions which he was occupying. There was, above all, one railway line, the control of which he must, cost what it may, secure. This was the line which, starting from Haapamäki station on the main line connecting southern and northern Finland, continued due east, via Jyväskylä, to Pieksämäki, whence two lines radiated across the county of Savolax, establishing in their turn connexions with the railway system of Carelia. This all-important Haapamäki-Pieksämäki line, strange to relate, was not completed until January 15th, 1918—that is to say, less than a fortnight before the War of Independence began. Seldom can a great enterprise of railway building have matured so appositely.

The capture of Haapamäki was effected under peculiarly dramatic circumstances. A Jaeger, Lennart Nordensvan, accompanied by a handful of men had, on January 28th, carried out a bold stroke, blowing up an important railway bridge south of Haapamäki. The next day, the small detachment turned up at Haapamäki station, then occupied by the Reds, who, although greatly outnumbering the Whites, fell back, returning however the next day, considerably reinforced. Nordensvan and his men were now hopelessly outnumbered: but at this juncture the position was unexpectedly retrieved through the sudden arrival, from Östermyra, of Matti Laurila and his Lappo men. The Reds now quickly disbanded, without so much as attempting a fight: and the key position of Haapamäki henceforth remained in the undisturbed possession of the Whites.

Further important points in this neighbourhood were captured during the next few days—Filpula to the south and Jyväskylä to the east. Of these, the former—by nature a strong position, protected by a swift stream and a system of lakes—was for weeks to come to mark a vital spot in the line of demarcation between White and Red Finland. Yet another bold stroke secured for the Whites the control of the line from Jyväskylä to Pieksämäki: thus the strategic railway of greatest importance to them in all Finland, was, from beginning to

end, in their power a few days after the commencement of hostilities.

Nothing shows better the eagerness of the Commander-in-Chief to avoid dallying in the north and to bring all available forces to the southern positions, than the telegram which he, after the victory of Uleåborg, sent to the leader of the expedition to that city. After congratulating and thanking everybody he continues: 'One thousand rifles are to be allotted to the arming of the district; all others are immediately to be dispatched to Östermyra. Return without delay, bringing with you the gunners and all the men that are not absolutely necessary for the northern district.' And a few days later, the fact that the northern campaign was liquidated, received official emphasis by the removal—on February 8th—of the G.H.Q. from Vasa to a more southern point, namely Östermyra. Here, a train was adapted for the offices of the Supreme Command; surrounded by a high wire fence it came to be known, in popular parlance, as 'the henhouse.'

At Östermyra, a most intense activity now began in order to set up the organization necessary for carrying the war to a successful conclusion. The question of providing a competent personnel for the more important posts was, of course, one of the utmost urgency; and towards the solution of the problem, valuable voluntary help came from Sweden. Some experienced Swedish Staff officers early in February joined the G.H.Q. where their work proved to be of incalculable importance; and one of the first to offer his services to the Commander-in-Chief was also a Finnish-born officer in the Swedish army, Colonel Ernst Linder, whose part in the war was to be of great distinction. The Swedish Government insisted that these and other officers who volunteered for the cause of Finland were to resign their commissions; and as to the purchase of war material, or even the passage across Swedish territory of arms and munitions purchased elsewhere, the official Swedish attitude was from the start purely negative. Privately, a good deal was done for Finland by an association called 'The Friends of Finland,' presided over by Johan

Mannerheim, the younger brother of Gustaf; and a small volunteer force—at no time exceeding 550 men—known as ‘The Swedish Brigade’ was raised under bitter opposition from the Socialist Party in Sweden. Among those who joined up was Gustaf Mannerheim’s nephew—the only son of his late brother Carl—who was later wounded in the fighting.

A Finnish naval officer who visited the G.H.Q. at Östermyra in February has drawn a vivid picture of it. “Everywhere,” he says, “there was life and movement. The entire railway station was full of soldiers and officers, who were having their meals there, while armed detachments were being trained in the surrounding plain. On the occasion of my call on General Mannerheim, I received my appointment as Chief of the Naval Staff, stationed at Vasa. During my brief stay at Östermyra I was able to appreciate what an enormous burden of work General Mannerheim had assumed. Until late at night he was busy, except for the brief meals of which he partook in company with the other staff officers. At all times he was the same—unperturbed, urbane, and companionable—although his noble personality impressed all and sundry who came into contact with him. His burden was shared without murmur by the entire staff, more especially by the Swedish officers attached to the Operations Section. At meal-time, conversation was absolutely natural and unconstrained; yet you always realized the respect and regard with which all looked up to their General.”

In every direction, preparations were pushed forward with the utmost energy. A gun foundry and artillery school was improvised at Jakobstad, where a young Swedish officer, Count Adolf Hamilton, took control: his drastic methods came in for criticism, but the Commander-in-Chief smiled: “He may do as he likes, as long as he gets me batteries.” And the first battery of grenade throwers was got ready by February 21st. Again, as to the supply of human material, as a first measure, two regiments of Grenadiers were recruited on a professional basis; but it soon became evident that another basis would have to be chosen, and Gustaf

Mannerheim at once recognized the simplest and most direct method in the revival of the Conscription Bill of 1878, which, although trampled under foot by the Czar in 1901, had never been legally repealed. The appropriate Proclamation was issued on February 18th: it provided, in the main, for the raising of twenty-one battalions of 650 men.

For the sake of greater clarity, it is now necessary, briefly, to review the military position in southern Finland about the middle of February. In the extreme east, there was the Carelian front, which, as we saw, began to be formed in the second half of January, and now, roughly, followed the course of the Vuoksen river. West of Lake Saimen, the front ran more or less straight towards the west, until it reached the southern end of Lake Päijänne, in the county of Tavastland, where it made a large loop towards the north, reaching its summit at Filpula. From here it went in an undulating line towards the west, across the county of Satakunta, terminating at Hvittisbofjärd on the Gulf of Bothnia: on this westernmost part of the front, Colonel Linder assumed command of the White forces at Kankaanpää, on February 21st.

To the south of the front now described, White forces had been operating in the province of Nyland ever since the outbreak of hostilities. These troops were neither numerous nor well equipped; but through their bold and fearless activities they immobilized for a while considerable Red forces in the south, and thereby made a material contribution towards the ultimate success of the Whites. Of these troops, one group operated to the immediate east of Helsingfors, and the other to the west of the capital. The former group finally dispersed on February 12th; the latter, on February 27th, was obliged to surrender, the Swedish Legation at Helsingfors intervening and securing for the Whites possible terms of capitulation.

Still further to the west, a White force was formed south of the front line at the beginning of February, and the experiences of this force make a chapter of particular interest in the history of the Finnish War of Independence, and vividly

illustrate certain international difficulties which the Commander-in-Chief was up against.

Composed of men from the city of Åbo and its neighbourhood, this corps was organized at the little port of Nystad, at the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia ; for this reason it is commonly called the Nystad Corps. Its original intention was to try to force a way through towards the north ; but this having proved impossible, a heroic decision was arrived at—namely, to attempt a march across the frozen sea to Åland—the principal island in the archipelago which lies between Finland and Sweden, but is Finnish territory—in the hope of being able to reach the front from there somehow. By this time, the strength of the corps had risen to some six hundred men : its equipment was very indifferent indeed, and Åland was studded with Russian garrisons, quartered in forts of great strength which Czarist Russia, in defiance of an existing military convention, had constructed during the World War. Nevertheless, the hazardous enterprise was undertaken ; the moving spirit of the corps was a young officer, Captain Fabritius, who had seen service during the World War and been appointed by the Finnish G.H.Q. to command the force, though for a while he was superseded by a senior officer.

The march across the ice was carried out under appalling hardships, in a snowstorm : but on arrival, despite its serious handicaps, the corps found itself able to accomplish a number of military feats of truly surprising nature. It turned out that the Russian garrisons in Åland were utterly demoralized and dispirited and one after the other, fortified positions of great strength, together with quantities of war material, fell into the hands of the Finns. It looked, indeed, as if Åland would provide the counterpart to the campaign in southern Ostrobothnia ; and hopes ran high, also because a steamer, the *Hero*, had been chartered to bring reinforcements from Sweden to the Finns, on February 12th. At this point, however, the Swedish Government intervened, stopped the *Hero*, and the next day despatched a naval squadron to Åland, ostensibly in order to protect Swedish subjects and the native population

of the islands. An armistice was simultaneously agreed to by the Finns, who hoped, as so often before, to bring about the surrender of the remaining Russian forces by means of negotiations.

The Swedish force had really been sent to Åland in order to give a backing to tendencies which for some time had come to the fore in the archipelago and aimed at the separation from Finland and reunion with Sweden. There was no question of giving Swedish help to the Nystad Corps: on the contrary, every effort was used to make it evacuate Åland as quickly as possible.

The stipulations of the armistice between Finns and Russians having been violated by the latter, Captain Fabritius on February 17th proceeded to attack the strong Russian position at Godby, which he carried and held against heavy counter-attacks made by the Russians, reinforced by Finnish Reds from the mainland, on the 19th.

So far from allowing the news of these Finnish successes to get known, the Swedish Government now began to paint the situation of the Nystad Corps in the darkest colours, and exercised great pressure on the Finnish chargé d'affaires in Stockholm, M. Alexis Gripenberg, to send a telegram ordering the Nystad Corps, in the name of General Mannerheim, to evacuate Åland. There existed, however, no instructions from the Commander-in-Chief which, by any stretch of imagination, could have been turned into a basis for such action. On the contrary, as far back as February 13th, a telegram from him to M. Gripenberg had stressed that no action in matters concerning Åland was to be taken except with his approval. Later on, his orders became still more definite: on February 19th, he telegraphed stressing that, given certain conditions, the Nystad Corps must 'without any question stay where it is'; and on the 20th came a further telegram saying that: 'If a few members of the Defence Corps have died the death of heroes, this does not prove that the situation is desperate.' 'For Finland's young army it is a point of honour to set Åland free with its own forces. . . . Final proposals are to

be submitted for my decision.' This last telegram was communicated by the Finnish Legation to the Swedish Government at noon on February 20th, for immediate transmission to the Nystad Corps; but it was suppressed, since—as it later transpired—it was held that it 'might have caused the renewal of hostilities and possibly, as a result, the destruction of Mariehamn, outrages on the population and the annihilation of the Finnish Corps.'

Indeed, Swedish pressure upon M. Gripenberg at this stage became so relentless that, having forwarded to the Commander-in-Chief the account of the position in Åland, given him by the Swedish Government, he late at night on February 20th wrote a telegram to the Nystad Corps saying: 'If your position seems untenable and prospect of speedy help not available, I strongly advise you to embark on the Swedish ships.' This was handed by him to the proper quarters, for transmission on behalf of the Swedish Government, and it was sent on with alacrity; but when it reached its destination the all-important qualifying phrase: 'If your position seems untenable and prospect of speedy help not available' had been suppressed. The Commander of the Nystad Corps thus merely received the strong unqualified advice of the Finnish representative in Sweden to leave Åland; and though no mention of the Commander-in-Chief occurs in the telegram, it could not fail to be interpreted by the recipients as a definite official instruction to take certain action. The Swedish Government was, moreover, in its own communications to the Finnish force in Åland, making free use of the name of Mannerheim in order to achieve the end it had in view.

Being in this way either left in the dark regarding the Commander-in-Chief's intentions, or definitely misled, it is not to be wondered at that the Nystad Corps, shortly before midnight on February 20th, should have agreed to the conditions for evacuation which were presented to it by the Swedish expeditionary force. The convention stipulated that the arms captured by the Finns from the Russians were to be returned to them; while the arms which had formed the original

equipment of the Nystad Corps were to be handed to the Swedes. On February 23rd, the Finns left Åland by steamer for Sweden and then went overland to Finland; here they were soon afterwards transferred to the Satakunta front, under Colonel Linder, and in the subsequent fighting worthily upheld the traditions from the Åland days. A brief dialogue took place when the Commander-in-Chief and the commander of the Nystad Corps met:

"Captain, I have never given you permission to leave Åland."

"General, I ask that my case be referred to a Court Martial."

The Court Martial which followed completely vindicated the young officer; but the Commander-in-Chief had been appreciating the general situation with characteristic rightness of judgment, even though the data he had to go by were of the slenderest.

The Russian troops in Åland which, according to assurances given to the Finns were to have left immediately after the latter, were allowed by the Swedes to remain in Åland for five more weeks during which time large consignments of arms and ammunition were sent by them to the Red Guards at Åbo. The Swedes themselves stayed on in Åland for some time afterwards until towards the end of April a convention between the Finnish and Swedish Governments arranged for their departure: but much had happened, as we shall see, before that convention was signed.

The month of February at length witnessed an event for which the whole of White Finland had been impatiently waiting: the return of the Jaegers to Finland, there to shoulder their all-important part in the War of Independence.

The negotiations in Berlin, which led up to this, had been particularly complicated, seeing that the German Government at the time was endeavouring to conclude a separate peace with Russia in Brest-Litovsk and did not wish to jeopardize the success of the peace negotiations by consenting to send a battalion, which ranked as part of the German army, to fight

against Russia in Finland. General von Ludendorff eventually decided that the Jaeger battalion was to be allowed to proceed to Finland, but after it had been formally eliminated from the German army : the Jaegers were to go to Finland, in Finnish ships, as civilians—though they were at liberty to put their uniforms and arms on board ship too—and after reaching Finland resume their uniforms. The battalion went through this elaborate, slightly farcical procedure : it ceased to be a German unit on February 5th. Moreover, by a fictitious transaction, a German private firm sold to a Finnish private firm a large quantity of war material, which was to accompany the Jaegers on their voyage to Finland.

On February 11th, the precious cargo of war material was shipped for Vasa from Libau : a small detachment of Jaegers went at the same time. The main body of the force, under the command of Colonel Thesleff, left two days later. Through the frozen Gulf of Bothnia, a powerful ice-breaker, belonging to the Finnish Government and recently recaptured from the Russians through a bold *coup*, opened a passage for the ships : and a few miles before the battalion reached Vasa, the whole country-side turned out on to the ice, extending an enthusiastic welcome to the young soldiers, who had braved so many dangers and now came back as Finland's only properly-trained military force, having, moreover, seen hard fighting during the World War. The next day—February 26th—the battalion was reviewed in the snowclad central square of Vasa : speeches were made by a member of the Government and by the Commander-in-Chief who formulated his greeting to the new arrivals as follows :

“ I bid you welcome, Jaegers, to the land of your fathers. At a time when the destiny of your country seemed at its darkest, you, young men, had faith in its future. You sacrificed your homes, your happiness, everything, so as to be able to build up for our unhappy country a better future. And your guiding star has not led you astray. Our country greets in you some of the best among its sons. Finland's young army of the future sees in you its teachers and leaders

to come. There now awaits you a great, glorious task—that of creating, over the whole of Finland, an army which can set Finland free and make of our country a great and powerful state.”

The speech was a perfect interpretation of the feelings which met the Jaegers on their return to Finland, where their presence created a sense of security and confidence not measurable by the actual number of the force. It is, incidentally worth noting, that this was the first occasion on which Gustaf Mannerheim delivered a speech in Finnish. Swedish being his mother tongue, and having received his education in Swedish until he first went to St. Petersburg, it is but natural that of the two national languages of Finland he should have chosen Swedish as the usual vehicle for the expression of his thoughts. But he had always known Finnish, and faced with the new circumstances that Destiny had had in store for him, he soon developed into a thoroughly competent and fluent Finnish scholar.

To some extent concurrent with the negotiations which ultimately brought about the return of the Jaegers, were those which centred round an armed intervention by Germany in Finland. The possibility of such an intervention had been mooted for a considerable time; and it will be recalled that in his first interview with M. Svinhufvud, Gustaf Mannerheim had given the clearest possible indication of his wish that German armed assistance should be avoided at all costs. The Red *coup d'état* at the end of January, and the ensuing increase in the Red Terror in southern Finland, had rallied, however, much additional support to the idea of German intervention. More especially those Finnish politicians, who found themselves in the territory controlled by the Reds, developed more and more the conviction, that victory for the Government was scarcely attainable without German aid, and that even if the Government could win unaided, victory under such conditions would take so long, that the Red misrule would have time to inflict irreparable damage upon southern Finland. The Prime Minister, carrying on a precarious existence as an

outlaw in Helsingfors, offers a notable case in point : and a communication, which on February 15th he was able to send through a Swedish diplomatic messenger to the Finnish representative in Berlin, M. Hjelt, definitely asked for foreign (*i.e.* German) help for southern Finland. This message, however, was very slow in reaching Berlin ; and by the time it got there, action in the sense demanded had already been decided upon.

M. Hjelt had more or less on his own initiative, and following his own inclination—which he knew, however, to be shared in many quarters at home—repeatedly applied for German intervention in Finland. Now, in the second half of February, after the temporary breakdown of the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations, the Germans had resumed military operations against Russia, advancing into the Baltic provinces and occupying Reval on February 25th. Germany, indeed, now considered herself to have free hands with regard to Russia ; and M. Hjelt was advised by the German military authorities on February 14th to repeat his previous requests for military assistance. On February 21st, he was then summoned to the German G.H.Q. and informed that the German Government had decided to intervene in Finland. As an anticipation of more important things to come, a squadron of warships was quickly sent to Åland, arriving off its coast on March 5th ; and two days later a German battalion was landed on the island which, it will be recalled, had lately been evacuated by the Nystad Corps, while the Russian garrisons were slowly preparing to leave Åland, and the Swedish expeditionary force was continuing its occupation indefinitely.

As to the reasons which prompted the German Government's decision to send the expeditionary force to Finland, the desire to stem the tide of Bolshevism may obviously have figured amongst them : but it is, of course, at this time of day, generally admitted that the move was decided upon principally because it meant a counterstroke to the Allied occupation of the Murman coast.

The news of the negotiations about armed help from

Germany, and of the German Government's decision to send such help, did not reach the Commander-in-Chief for some time. Communication between the Finnish Government and its representatives abroad was very slow and uncertain at the time; and although M. Hjelt, as soon as he had returned to Berlin from the German G.H.Q., sent a messenger to Finland bringing the tidings of the coming German help, this intelligence was received at Vasa only on March 2nd. In the meantime, Gustaf Mannerheim had his hands full. A Red attack along most of the front was attempted towards the end of February, but although it entailed some sharp fighting, did not lead to any results of real consequence: the consignment of war material, provided from Germany, had reached Vasa just in time to enable the Whites to put up an effective resistance. Nevertheless, the Commander-in-Chief had felt that the situation on the most distant front—the Carelian one—was of a nature which called for a personal visit by him; so on February 23rd he appeared among the heroic troops desperately defending this sector, and issued on this occasion a famous, rousing army order, which concluded: "Relying on our just and noble cause, relying on our brave men and self-sacrificing women, we will create a powerful and great Finland." Hurrying back to Vasa, he met and greeted the Jaegers there, as we saw, on February 26th. Shortly afterwards, the Commander-in-Chief on receiving two German newspaper correspondents expressed himself with great confidence about his military prospects and rejected the idea of German armed assistance; this was immediately telegraphed to Germany, and caused a last-minute hesitation on the part of General von Ludendorff to proceed with the expedition to Finland. M. Hjelt on this, in a note to the German Foreign Office, 'once more, imploringly' asked for German assistance; and as a result, things were allowed to go forward.

On receiving the news contained in M. Hjelt's despatch, all the members of the Vasa Government decided to proceed at once to the G.H.Q. in order to discuss with the Commander-in-Chief the situation which had arisen. There was also

another complicated question which demanded attention simultaneously. Long before the Jaegers started for their journey home, the future army organization during the coming conflict in Finland had not unnaturally formed a subject of much speculation and discussion amongst them; and as a result, Colonel Thesleff and several of the leading Jaegers had elaborated a cut-and-dried plan. This provided, briefly, for the use of the Jaeger battalion, suitably reinforced, as a *Stosstruppe* in the German phrase, as a striking force upon which the decisive fighting would devolve, while the Defence Corps were to be employed on the less important fronts and in guarding lines of communication. The plan, as drawn up, bore, however, little relation to the military situation as it had developed in Finland by the time the Jaegers landed in Vasa. Moreover, it will be recalled that a new army organization, for which the Commander-in-Chief was responsible, had been set up in Finland on February 18th, a week before the homecoming of the Jaegers. This organization as we saw, based upon the Conscription Bill of 1878, had in view the creation of twenty-one battalions of 650 men; and among these battalions, the Jaegers were to be distributed as instructors—officers and non-commissioned officers. It was under this angle that the highly important functions of the Jaegers had been envisaged in the speech which the Commander-in-Chief addressed to them at the review in Vasa on February 26th. Such a conception of their future duties met, however, with very strong opposition among the Jaegers. The adoption of their original plan was insistently urged upon the Commander-in-Chief, who, however, would not yield. Desperate counsels then prevailed among the Jaegers: and when, in the evening of March 2nd, the members of the Vasa Government left for Östermyra, one of their number was seen by a delegation of the Jaegers, who asked him to convey the following ultimatum to the Commander-in-Chief: either the programme of the Jaegers was to be adopted, or they would proceed the next morning to the nearest front and start operations on their own.

On receiving the news of the impending arrival of the German expeditionary force—an announcement of which not the least inkling had reached him—the Commander-in-Chief formulated his opposition to the scheme in the strongest possible terms. It was not primarily a question of his own sympathies with the Entente: his conception of the problem went much deeper. His friend, Captain (now General) Ignatius, has recorded how he once developed his ideas on the subject as follows:

“A nation must itself fight its struggle of independence: thus it gains self-confidence and gets a different position in the world. In future, it will always be stressed in Socialist quarters, that it was with foreign assistance that the Red rebellion was overcome: but we must show that we were able to achieve this result with our own strength—and, moreover, were able to drive the Russians out of the country.” All along, during the fateful interview on March 2nd, the Commander-in-Chief stressed his profound conviction that the Finnish army would be able to achieve victory without the aid of the Germans. At one moment he even succeeded in bringing the members of the Government round to his point of view. The officer commanding the Jaegers, Colonel Thesleff, who had accompanied the members of the Government to Östermyra, was sent for and asked to go to Berlin to notify the German Government that the Finnish Government declined the German help. This, however, Colonel Thesleff absolutely refused to do, and developed at length the reasons which, in his opinion, militated in favour of accepting the German help. The Commander-in-Chief still would not hear of this, and openly stated his intention of resigning the moment the first German soldier set his foot on Finnish soil.

Colonel Thesleff now left the conference, and discussion as to the action to take was continued. At length there were signs that the Commander-in-Chief began to relent, though no definite decision was arrived at. Before the conference adjourned for a late supper, the member of the Government who had been seen by the Jaegers before his departure for

G.H.Q.—Dr. Renvall—communicated to the Commander-in-Chief, in a conversation between four eyes, the ultimatum of the Jaegers. This act of insubordination and sabotage against the head of their country's army, naturally roused the indignation of Gustaf Mannerheim; and he again stressed his inclination to resign. Characteristically, his main point was, that while he himself could be spared as a Commander-in-Chief, Finland could not possibly afford to lose the Jaegers—the only existing basis upon which her future army could be built.

Supper followed, with further discussions of the many burning problems of the day: before the party broke up, Gustaf Mannerheim intimated his wish to resign and indicated, upon inquiry, General Löfström as his most suitable successor as Commander-in-Chief. After this the members of the Government returned to Vasa.

The absurd bluff of the Jaegers about 'proceeding to the nearest front next morning' was properly and successfully called by the Commander-in-Chief. Meanwhile, in the midst of all these violent behind-the-line conflicts regarding high politics and army organization, he had his immediate duties as a soldier to attend to. Therefore, no sooner had the visitors from Vasa left, than he proceeded by train, in the middle of the night, to inspect a vital and vulnerable point of the front—the position at Filpula. His friend and Quartermaster General, Hannes Ignatius, was with him: and soon after the departure of the train, Gustaf Mannerheim confided to him his intention of resigning. Captain Ignatius, who had been warned about this intention on the part of the Commander-in-Chief and asked to try to influence him to change his mind, did his best in a three-hour talk to dissuade Gustaf Mannerheim from taking such a fateful step. He appealed to his interlocutor upon every conceivable ground: "I told him," says General Ignatius, "that it was his duty to carry the war to a successful conclusion, since there was no one who could take his place: and that he was not to make a mess of the biggest thing of his life." All the benefits for Finland, which could possibly

be construed as deriving from a German intervention, were likewise urged during this long, heart-to-heart talk between two friends, with no witnesses present. At length, Gustaf Mannerheim yielded : but he was adamant as regards the necessity of securing adequate guarantees from the Germans. The heroic effort of his country was not to be merged as something unimportant in the routine business of a German military expedition ; nor was any part of Finland to be treated simply as a conquered country.

Agreement in principle was reached with the Vasa Government the next day, March 3rd. Direct communication with the German High Command was held by Gustaf Mannerheim to be the most effective means of securing the objects which he had in view ; and so he sent the following telegram to General von Ludendorff—the German military leader with whom, until then, he had had no other contact but that of the determined enemy on the fields of battle :

‘ On behalf of the Finnish army and the volunteer peasant forces, I beg Your Excellency to convey to His Majesty the expression of our deep gratitude for the help which we have received and without which we would not now stand firm and victorious in Finland’s struggle for her independence. To Your Excellency personally I express our sincere gratitude. At the same time I venture to stress the following points of view :

‘ In order that the help which the German expeditionary corps brings this country may be fully effective, the following two conditions ought to be observed : for one thing, that the German expeditionary corps as soon as it has reached Finnish soil is placed under the Finnish High Command ; and secondly that the Chief of the expedition in a proclamation addressed to the people of Finland explains, that German troops have arrived, not in order to take part in the inner conflicts of the Finnish nation, but in order to help Finland in her fight against the murderous bands of foreign invaders. Otherwise, Finnish national sentiment might easily be hurt, and there will arise, among the different strata of the Finnish people, mutual

hatred and bitterness, which, perhaps, even a century might not dispel.

'If these conditions be observed, I shall look upon myself as entitled to greet, in the name of the Finnish army, the victorious, brave German battalions, and to convey to them the warm gratitude of the Finnish people for assistance in our fight for liberty.'

These were manly, dignified words, striking a note which must have been unfamiliar to the German Government in communications received from nations which they were assisting. Indeed, it is on record that the German intermediary in Stockholm, by whom this telegram was forwarded to its destination, deemed it necessary to accompany it with a 'commentary.'

The telegram reached the German High Command on March 7th; and whatever may have been thought about the novelty of its tone, this was still a time when there were Germans who could respond to other sentiments than those of Byzantinism. Hindenburg himself replied to the Finnish Commander-in-Chief on March 10th as follows :

'GENERAL, BARON MANNERHEIM.

'In reply to the telegram to General Ludendorff.

'I have forwarded the thanks of Your Excellency to H.M. the Emperor. The wishes of Your Excellency are met in the following fashion : (1) The German Commander-in-Chief will, from the moment his troops land in Finland, take his military orders from Your Excellency. (2) The German Commander-in-Chief will issue a proclamation in conformity with Your Excellency's desires.

'As a result, I am fully convinced, that a good comradeship-in-arms will exist between the German and Finnish troops, and that their joint work will be for the happiness of our peoples.

'For reasons of supply, I request that the German troops may be employed primarily on the right wing.

'GENERAL FIELD-MARSHAL VON HINDENBURG.'

Gustaf Mannerheim had thus carried every point he had stipulated: indeed, German acceptance of his terms extended to the minutest details of phrasing. 'The right wing'—i.e. the forces in south-western Finland—was, of course, the right wing of the *Finnish* army, as commanded from Östermyra: not of the German expeditionary corps.

By the time that this telegram was received, the conflict with the Jaegers had also been settled as a result of Gustaf Mannerheim's firmness of purpose and diplomatic ability. After those long discussions with the members of the Vasa Government on March 2nd, and the hours of talk in the night with Captain Ignatius on the train, he had yet lain awake in his sleeping car, trying to think of a settlement acceptable to both parties—the Jaegers and himself. The next day he sent for three of the leading Jaegers and explained to them his view of the situation.

"I am convinced," said the Commander-in-Chief, "that the plan which I have prepared during one month of fighting with our enemies is preferable to yours which was drawn up far away from here. But I understand too, that a thousand hot heads—which you have risked as I never have risked mine—find it difficult to give up the plan of which they have been dreaming; while I, as an old, experienced soldier, must find it easier to think of the ways which lead to the goal."

He therefore now proposed as a compromise that the number of conscript battalions, to be trained and officered by the Jaegers, was to be reduced from twenty-one to nine, nearly three times as strong as originally planned: these were to be formed into three regiments, plus one battalion of pioneers and another of field-telegraph operators. The three regiments were to be commanded by the three German officers who accompanied the Jaegers.

The arrangement suggested by the Commander-in-Chief went a long way towards meeting the idea which, from a psychological point of view, obviously mattered a great deal to the Jaegers—the retention of their battalion as a striking force. On the other hand it eliminated the difficulties arising

from the notion, that the striking force was to be used at one point only. The brunt of the fighting would now be borne by the Jaeger regiments wherever needed : and this naturally appealed strongly to the sense of pride and the *esprit de corps* of the Jaegers.

The representatives of the Jaegers reported the suggested compromise to the battalion at Vasa : and although at first it met with some opposition, it was in the end loyally accepted, and observed by everybody concerned. The share of the Jaegers in the work of organization and in the fighting that lay ahead of them was in every way a highly creditable one.

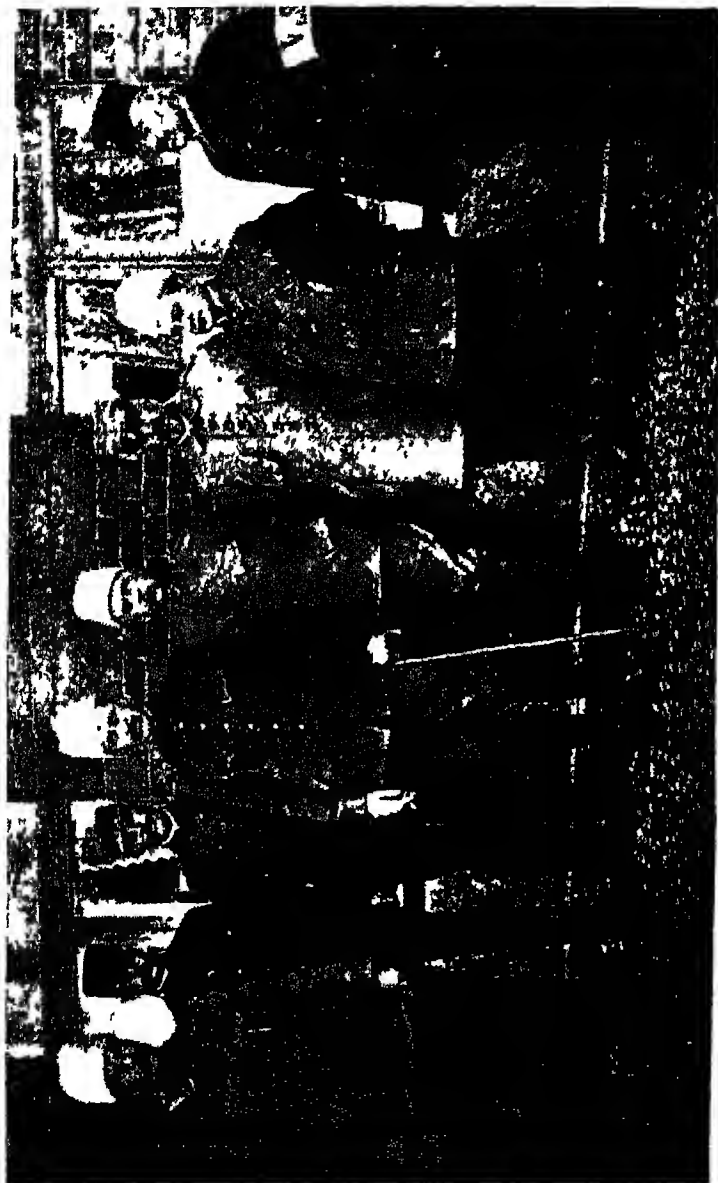
The performance of Gustaf Mannerheim in negotiating, simultaneously and under the heavy pressure of other cares, the settlement of two questions of extreme delicacy and difficulty, cannot be rated too highly. And more particularly, anyone who has followed the outline here given of his reactions to the idea of German help to the Finnish army, will realize why it is that every child in Finland knows how utterly baseless, indeed grotesque, is the accusation of Pro-Germanism, so often heard outside Finland against him.

As we saw, by the time that Hindenburg's telegram was received in Finland, a German squadron had—on March 5th—anchored off the coast of Åland, and a German battalion had been landed on the island on March 7th. These were, to the Finnish Commander-in-Chief, definite indications of things to come, and inevitably acted upon him as a spur to take the initiative in order to achieve a decisive success as soon as possible. This success had, indeed, at all costs to be gained before German troops had disembarked on the Finnish mainland, lest it might be argued that it was to their appearance on the scene that the freeing of Finland was essentially due. For a hundred reasons the Commander-in-Chief might well have decided to defer action and continue his work of organization and preparation : but the political reason for speedy action must perforce outweigh all other considerations.

Meanwhile, on the very day when Hindenburg telegraphed his reply, the Reds launched an offensive on the Tavastland

front, of a much more determined character than the one which they had attempted in the same sector towards the end of February. The main objective was now, as before, the strategic railway line Haapamäki-Pieksämäki, whose fundamental importance for the whole war of independence has been stressed previously. Operations were directed from Tammerfors, Finland's principal industrial city (except Helsingfors), with a correspondingly large Red element among its population; that notorious *marvais sujet*, Eero Haapalainen, whom we encountered as a Red leader in Helsingfors in January, now turns up as 'Commander-in-Chief of all troops in Finland'; but the military brain behind the operation was a Russian officer, Colonel Svetshnikoff, officially designated as Haapalainen's adjutant. Great hopes were pinned by the Reds on this offensive: war material in abundance was provided from Helsingfors, and Russian technical experts likewise arrived from the south. Manner and his colleagues of the 'People's Commissariat' turned up too, the former making fiery speeches in the open air from his motor-car. But if the Reds were stronger than before, so were the Whites; and after a few days' fighting it was obvious that the former could make no headway. At this point we may note the exit of Haapalainen from the arena; and the initiative was no longer in the hands of the Reds. It was now Gustaf Mannerheim's turn to launch *his* offensive, which in just over three weeks was to bring about the most important military success of the war—the capture of Tammerfors. In an order of the day, issued to his troops on March 14th, the Commander-in-Chief foreshadowed the operations which were about to take place: 'The hour has come, the hour for which the whole nation is waiting. Your starving and martyred brothers and sisters in southern Finland fix their last hope on you. The mutilated bodies of the murdered citizens and the ruins of the burnt-down villages call to heaven: vengeance upon the traitors. Break down all obstacles! Advance, White army of White Finland!'

The country across which the White advance was to be



GUSTAF MANNIRIIM A GHQ, 1918



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM DECORATING A FINNISH SOLDIER, 1918

made lies astride the boundary between the counties of Tavastland and Satakunta. It forms part of the western portion of the Finnish Lake Plateau, which means that it is broken up by innumerable lakes, some of them of considerable size, but most of them small; they are interconnected by streams, thereby linking up into well-defined water systems, for which eventually large rivers form the outlet to the sea. A glance at the map of Finland will show that the lakes tend to be long in shape, extending roughly from north to south, running thus parallel with the White advance. The principal lakes of the district are Lake Päijänne, near the northern end of which lies Jyväskylä; and, to the west of it, Lake Näsijärvi, at the southern end of which lies Tammerfors. Characteristic of the landscape round Tammerfors are the steep ridges which intersect the country: these rise out of a moorland, covered mostly with forests of tall and straight-stemmed pines. The battleground was thus utterly different from that of the wide, monotonous plains of Ostrobothnia. In March and April the lakes were still frozen, though the effect of the spring sun was tending to make big troop movements across the ice increasingly dangerous from the end of March onwards. Snow was, of course, still lying deep everywhere.

The first decisive blow of the advance was struck when, on March 16th, a White force attacked the strong position known as 'the lock of Tavastland', at Länkipohja, about a third of the way between Päijänne and Näsijärvi. This operation was in charge of Colonel Wilkman, again a Finnish officer who had fought in the Russian army during the World War, and had only lately returned to his native country. There was hard fighting, but in the evening victory had been won: there was nothing to impede the further advance to the important railway station of Orivesi, on the main railway line between Tammerfors and Filpula. The Lappo men, ever foremost when there was fighting to be done, were in this affair too: and both Matti Laurila and one of his sons fell on the field of battle. As his dying wish, Matti Laurila asked that his second son be appointed to command the company

that had been his : and a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief immediately granted this request of the brave Lappo yeoman who carried into a twentieth-century war something of the traditions of another age. And there were many like him.

The next day, March 17th, in spite of the fact that the Reds had managed to concentrate some troops in front of Orivesi, Colonel Wilkman succeeded in pushing still further towards the latter point. His forces represented the left wing of the army group which the Commander-in-Chief had meant to defeat and surround the Reds at Filpula and Ruovesi : the centre of that group was commanded by Colonel Wetzer and the right wing by Colonel Hjalmarson, a Swedish officer, who, for some years before the World War, had been chief instructor of the Persian Gendarmerie, and who now had volunteered to fight in Finland. Unfortunately, Colonel Hjalmarson failed to perform the task allotted to him sufficiently quickly : it was not until March 19th that he reached the position at Murola, whence he rapidly enough established contact with Colonel Wetzer's troops : but by that time the Red forces at Filpula and Ruovesi had succeeded in escaping towards the south through the gap left open in the encircling movement. Colonel Wilkman's troops, on the left wing, had not been able to follow up their initial advantage in the direction of Orivesi : an armoured train had played havoc among the Whites on the 18th, and Colonel Wilkman had had to withdraw, the railway line at one moment so nearly within his grasp, thus becoming available for the retreat of the Reds. Converging upon the station of Korkeakoski, north of Orivesi by road and by railway, and continuing from there mainly by railway, the Reds sought safety in a headlong flight which carried them to Tammerfors and even beyond in an indescribable panic. When Colonel Wilkman, during his offensive, on March 20th did capture Orivesi he found that the birds had flown. What had occurred in the course of these few days was no doubt fundamentally a great success for the Whites : the whole of the Red front at Filpula and Ruovesi had

collapsed; the G.H.Q. had been moved some seventy miles to the south-east—from Östermyra to Filpula; and a giant stride towards the capture of Tammerfors had been taken: but six thousand of the best troops of the Reds had made good their escape and were yet to put up an obstinate fight.

In the absence of any resistance, the advance towards Tammerfors proceeded during the next few days at a very quick pace: on March 22nd there was, however, some fighting before the important position of Vehmais—a railway station some seven miles due east of Tammerfors—could be captured. At this stage, too, the G.H.Q. moved south again after its brief halt at Filpula: by March 25th it was installed at Vehmais. But before this happened, events of great consequence had occurred. For one thing, Colonel Wilkman was dispatched to capture the station of Lembois, about seventeen miles south of Tammerfors: this important move in the encircling of Tammerfors was carried out on March 24th. The same day brought also important results to the west of the city. It will be remembered that Colonel Linder had, on February 21st, assumed command on the Satakunta front, which had seen a good deal of fighting during the past month, and where the Nystad Corps had been operating since March 3rd. The Reds had been pressing Colonel Linder's troops hard, when the Commander-in-Chief ordered Colonel Hjalmarson, who had advanced to Teisko on the east side of Lake Näsijärvi, to cross the ice and go to the assistance of Colonel Linder. Owing to the lateness of the season the march across the frozen lake turned out to be a decidedly hazardous undertaking: but it was successfully carried out on March 22nd; and on March 24th the forces of Colonel Hjalmarson effected a junction with those of Colonel Linder at Kyröfors, an important Red position which the Commander on the Satakunta front had captured early that day. Soon afterwards the railway leading from Tammerfors towards the west was reached by the Whites: so the only two railway communications which the Reds at Tammerfors had had with

their rear were now cut—in the south by Colonel Wilkman, in the west by Colonel Linder.

The first day of Easter week, March 25th, brought the besiegers one step further towards their objective : it saw the conquest, after very hard fighting, of the village of Messuby, about half-way between Vehmais and Tammerfors. It lies at the foot of one of the typical lofty Tavastland ridges, called Kalevankangas, which guards the entrance to Tammerfors : and this bulwark the attackers could not carry that day.

Orders for the storming of Tammerfors were now due to be given at any moment, but they were preceded by a characteristic proclamation by the Commander-in-Chief, issued on March 26th. In order fully to appreciate this, it is necessary to recall a tragic incident which occurred as far back as January 30th, and which, even in a period abounding with Red atrocities, occupies a place apart for sheer intensity of horror. The members of the defence corps of Tammerfors and a couple of neighbouring communities had on that day met in the country, at a place called Suinula : the organization of the ' White Guards ' in those parts was still in its beginnings, so the sum total of the men was only eighty, and they had practically no arms. The Red Guards of Tammerfors, having got wind of this, organized a pursuit of the Whites and overtook them. An ' armed conflict ' was simply unthinkable for the reasons stated : so there was nothing for the Whites but to capitulate, and proper terms for surrender were drawn up and signed. Thereupon the Reds proceeded to shoot the unarmed Whites in cold blood : the massacre went on for twenty minutes, followed by the plundering of the victims. With memories of this Suinula massacre fresh in their minds, it would have been only natural if the Whites, fighting in this identical neighbourhood, had felt some inclination to exact retribution. This was, obviously, anathema to Gustaf Mannerheim : and so his order of the day of March 26th stressed that ' no atrocity may smirch the fair name of the White army. In Tammerfors there are now hundreds of members of different foreign missions in St. Petersburg, and

on their evidence the renown of our country as a civilized state will largely depend.'

One more day was allowed to elapse, in the course of which invitations to surrender were extended to the beleaguered city; and on Maundy Thursday, March 28th—requisite reinforcements having been sent for from the north—orders were given to storm Tammerfors.

It was the 2nd Jaeger Regiment and the Swedish Brigade upon which the brunt of the fighting fell earlier in the day: it was they who attacked the key position of Kalevankangas from the south and eventually carried it after overcoming the embittered resistance of the Reds. The losses suffered by the Whites at this point were on an enormous scale: the rate of deaths in some companies of the Jaeger Regiment amounted to forty per cent. Attacks from the north-east had also been pressed home; and all the while a heavy artillery fire was kept up. The operation was first watched by the Commander-in-Chief from the church tower of Messuby: and an eye-witness has recorded his impression of the imperturbable calm of Gustaf Mannerheim as the gunfire of the Reds began to be directed more and more insistently at the quarters of the regimental staff, where he was issuing orders to one commander after the other. This done, he walked calmly through the village, observing the enemy lines all the while through his binoculars.

Positions of great and decisive value were secured during the struggle, but the capture of the city proved impossible to achieve on that day, in spite of the prodigies of valour of those who kept up the fighting until late in the afternoon. Inside Tammerfors there was chaos: but the Red soldiers were still holding out with a tenacity and a courage to which it is impossible not to pay a tribute.

"Tammerfors," remarked the Commander-in-Chief to the head of the Norwegian ambulance giving voluntary service to his troops, "Tammerfors is a harder nut than I expected."

For the moment it was obviously the best course to suspend operations, bring up reinforcements, guns, and munitions, and

prepare for the resumption of hostilities in every way. In the light of the experiences gained, plans providing for every eventuality were drawn up; there was no further fighting during Easter; but on Wednesday, April 3rd, everything was ready for the final attack.

An important contact was made by the Commander-in-Chief on Easter Saturday: for he met again the Finnish Prime Minister, M. Svinhufvud, who, together with another member of the Government, had effected an audacious escape by sea from Helsingfors at the beginning of March, and, via Germany and Sweden, had returned to Finland. It was now for the second time in their lives that the two men met: but the situation had indeed undergone a radical change since the day in January when their first interview had to take place in the utmost secrecy and amid a general uncertainty which could not well have been greater.

Also, it should not be forgotten at this stage that, whilst developments before Tammerfors demanded the immediate attention of the Commander-in-Chief day and night, he was never losing sight of the claims of another and most important front—the front of Carelia. Here the Whites were still holding out, but the pressure of the Reds against their weak forces was such that things were nearing breaking-point. This front had at all costs to be saved, notably because upon it depended the great strategic idea of the whole campaign—the cutting off of the Reds from Russia and the encircling of the entire enemy army. Things had to be rushed at Tammerfors, as we have seen, because the Germans were coming: but another and most imperative reason for employing storm tactics was the urgency of saving the Carelian front. On the same day as Lembois and Kyröfors were taken—March 24th—a mission left the G.H.Q. to prepare action on that front.

In the night between April 2nd and 3rd, all preparations were completed round Tammerfors. An inveterate Shakespearean might have indulged in quotations about Birnam Wood: for the storm-troops wore in their caps fir branches, which were

to serve as a means of recognizing friend from foe : and hence it is that to this day the fir branch is the emblem of the Defence Corps of Finland. Artillery fire, after an introductory phase, was brought to the height of utmost intensity at 2.30 a.m. : then, at 3 a.m., there was complete silence. A rocket went up in the night : the storming began.

The attack was pushed on from three directions : from the north-east, from the east and from the south. Of the three groups operating, the one attacking from the north-east was the most successful, and soon was progressing steadily, under heavy fighting, capturing block after block of houses. The group attacking from the east was disorganized at the outset by the artillery fire of the Reds : though the first company, under Captain Melin—whose bravery was a legend—pushed forward, captured the Museum Buildings on the height of Näsilinna, and held out all day against violent and ceaseless attacks by the Reds. When evening came, he had lost half his men, and spent all his ammunition : so protected by the darkness he carried out a bold and skilful retreat across the frozen Näsijärvi. Meanwhile, the rest of the group attacking from the east had been re-organized, and carried out some heavy and successful fighting, in which the Swedish Brigade once again covered itself with glory : its distinguished list of casualties reads somewhat like that of the Franco-Belgians at Castelfidardo. The group eventually linked up with the third group, which, attacking from the south, had at first progressed but slowly ; and by the time evening came, on the 3rd, the White army was in control of the eastern part of Tammerfors, as far as the waterfall which serves as an outlet to Lake Näsijärvi.

The next two days saw a great deal of embittered street fighting : but in spite of the obstinate Red resistance, it was obvious that the end was near, and on April 5th the Commander-in-Chief, in his concern for the Carelian front, even found time to make a lightning journey all the way to St. Andreae and back. In the evening of the same day, the Reds asked for an armistice. This was refused, only terms of

surrender being granted ; and early the next day, April 6th, what remained of the Red army laid down their arms. The Commander-in-Chief could report victory to the Government : and his dispatch is characteristic in more ways than one—the formula of official routine with which it begins, the stressing of the political aspects of victory at the end :

‘It is my agreeable duty to report to the Government of Finland, that, according to news come to hand during the night, Tammerfors has been captured. Through the capture of Tammerfors the first great strategic enterprise has been carried to a successful conclusion. The firm resistance of the enemy is hereby fundamentally broken. This victory has been achieved *solely through the heroism and blood of Finland’s own troops.*’

An army order, issued the next day, developed certain other points of view suggested by the hard-won success.

‘I thank you on behalf of our country, the Government of Finland and myself for the incomparable bravery and determination shown by you in all the fighting during the past three weeks, whose great epilogue is the conquest of Tammerfors. This is the greatest and most sanguinary battle that has ever been fought in Finland. This victory is also the most brilliant one ever won by Finnish troops. This victory is, moreover, the victory of the civilization of the entire world over the Bolsheviks of Russia and their doctrines of world revolution and destruction of civilization. Hence, I am convinced, that the tidings of the victory at Tammerfors are received with joy not only in Finland, but in the entire civilized world ; and that the victory in Tammerfors is a victory which gives our young, brave army the laurel of glory. . . .

‘Young brave army of Finland, I salute you to-day, and congratulate you on the victory bought with the blood of your heart.’

The relief brought to the law-abiding citizens of Tammerfors through the victory of the Whites was indescribable and

found in a thousand ways the most touching expression. When, on April 7th, the victorious troops were drawn up in a square outside the principal church of the city, and the Municipal Council and twelve clergymen, preceded by a bishop, met the Commander-in-Chief in state, it is said that even his habitual self-control almost failed him for a moment. Colonel, or rather Major-General, Linder—for the capture of Tammerfors had brought well-deserved promotion to him, as to Colonel Wetzter and Colonel Wilkman—has related an episode during the thanksgiving service which followed ; and it is perhaps worth while re-telling it, since it is so characteristic both of the lengths to which the democratic spirit sometimes tended to go in Finland's citizen army, and of the complete freedom from ' side ' in the man who led it. The Commander-in-Chief sat in the first pew, immediately on the right of the central gangway. The church was filled to overflowing, many people standing : among them a private who, from his place in the central gangway, discovered that there was a little room in the first pew, on the left of the General. He therefore, quite innocently, stepped forward and sat down in the pew, forcing the Commander-in-Chief to make room for him—which the former did without turning a hair : and so the private occupied the place of honour during the rest of the service. An unconventional episode, certainly : but perhaps it had a symbolical significance which made it rather apposite.

The Red army, liquidated at Tammerfors, had a strength of at least 25,000 men : of these 11,000 were taken prisoners, and thirty guns and some 70 machine-guns were also captured. Moreover, a quantity of rolling stock now fell into the hands of the Whites sufficient to relieve them permanently of their previous difficulties in that respect which had been considerable. The White forces engaged were some 22,000-23,000 men, with 35 guns and also 140 machine-guns. Several of the Red leaders managed to escape ; one, however, was captured, Yrjö Mäkelin, and the Commander-in-Chief made the men set to guard him responsible with their own heads for his safety.

Several students of military science have commented at length on the capture of Tammerfors. It has been held up to praise as a splendid instance of an ambitious and complex plan achieving its aim in the complete annihilation of the enemy army. Special commendation has been given to the Commander-in-Chief for his use of the reserves, never losing control of the whole operation and being able to take effective counter measures wherever needed. It has also been emphasized that the enterprise, as carried out, bears the stamp of a typical 'cavalry mentality,' and that an advance such as that of Colonel Wilkman to Lembois, is a bold, deeply outflanking movement thoroughly characteristic of Gustaf Mannerheim's methods. Tremendous demands were made upon troops but insufficiently trained and meeting with a strong resistance at a difficult season : but the genius of the Commander-in-Chief carried the White army to complete victory. If Finland to-day can face her future, it is due to the confidence in herself and in Gustaf Mannerheim that ultimately dates back to the victory of Tammerfors.

CHAPTER VII

THE GERMANS LAND IN FINLAND. LAST RED EXCESSES.
GUSTAF MANNERHEIM CAPTURES WIBORG, LIBERATES THE
WHOLE TERRITORY AND ENTERS HELSINGFORS ON MAY 16TH,
1918

ON the very day—April 3rd—when the second, and successful, attack on Tammerfors began, the German expeditionary force landed at Hangö. From the political point of view, Gustaf Mannerheim had not taken decisive action a day too soon.

The German expeditionary force, known as the Baltic Division, was transported to Finland direct from Danzig; it consisted of about 9,500 men, with 18 guns, 10 mine-throwers, and 165 machine-guns. The command was in the hands of an experienced General, Count Rüdiger von der Goltz. This division was shortly afterwards supplemented by a detachment of 2,500 men, with two artillery batteries, which was formed in Estonia under Colonel von Brandenstein and effected two successive landings, on April 7 and 11th at Lovisa, east of Helsingfors. The transports ships which brought the Baltic Division to Finland were convoyed by a naval squadron under Admiral Meurer.

From Hangö, which was captured without a shot being fired, the Germans quickly pushed forward in the direction of Helsingfors. This movement was not really dictated by strategic considerations, but rather by a desire to rescue the capital of Finland from the plight in which it had been held for two months and a half by the Red Terror; and with this went naturally a wish to deal as heavy a blow to the morale of the Reds as possible, through breaking their regime in

Helsingfors, which was the centre of the nervous system of the body politic.

Helsingfors had, indeed, suffered untold hardships under the Reds, but the city was decidedly not cowed. On the contrary, great courage had been shown by White volunteers, drilling in secret in private houses, under a central organization, against the day when they could take their place at the side of their White comrades-in-arms elsewhere. The White intelligence service functioned admirably, and through methods of unsurpassed boldness managed to transmit its information straight to the White G.H.Q.: for weeks on end their secret agent would, every night, be in direct telegraphic communication with the Staff train at Östermyra. The great majority of people in Helsingfors lived, however, without any contact with the outer world, and among those upon whom the isolation weighed most heavily was naturally Gustaf Mannerheim's sister, Sophie, still attending to her daily and responsible duties as Head Matron of the Surgical University Hospital. She had experienced great happiness seeing her brother daily for breakfast during his stay in Helsingfors in January; and she had rejoiced particularly that, like herself, he should have been present when the Diet on January 8th unanimously cheered M. Svinhufvud's announcement regarding the recognition of Finland's independence. A letter of hers, written at the time, notes how impressed Gustaf Mannerheim was 'by the simplicity of it all and by Svinhufvud's personality.' Then her brother had vanished from her ken; and it was not until late in January that he was heard of again, as the centre of news which brought great pride, but also anxiety, to the sister's heart. A couple of letters written in February and March to her sister, Countess Louis Sparre, in Sweden, describe very graphically the torment of existence in Helsingfors at that time. Even her professional activities were affected by the situation, as when the incompetent Red doctors had succeeded in nearly killing their ambulance cases, and they then were handed over to her hospital 'so that it may be said that the Reds, who are sent to

the Surgical Hospital, die.' Herself, she made no difference between Whites and Reds, but would pay regular visits to the mortuary where the massacred bodies were washed and tended by her personally. Not a trace of bitterness or vindictiveness appears in her; full of confidence in the final outcome, she yet only sees the immense tragedy of it all, and is balanced in her judgments to the last. 'There must be no reaction when the Whites have won. Many have joined the Reds from true conviction. But the leaders have been deceivers, and upon them rests a great responsibility!' One day a wonderful thing happened. Whilst she was out, a humble secret messenger had appeared, and written down on a slip of paper a message learnt by heart. All it said was: 'Better and better, more and more pleased'—in its Swedish form even more tersely: '*Bättre och bättre, nöjdare och nöjdare.*'

Helsingfors, then, was to be the first goal of the Baltic division: from Hangö, it advanced rapidly eastward along the coast, meeting only at one point with more serious resistance. On April 11th, the Germans were at the gates of Helsingfors: the Swedish Legation tried to mediate, but its efforts were in vain. The Red leaders had, incidentally, a couple of days before, taken to their heels and fled to Wiborg, where Manner was invested with the powers of a dictator; it was only the smaller fry which was left behind. The powerful Russian fleet, long concentrated in Helsingfors, had, by arrangement with the Germans, proceeded to home waters already on April 5th and 8th. The German occupation of Helsingfors, effected in the course of the 12th and the 13th, was no major military operation, even if it was accompanied by a good deal of fighting. The White Guard formations, now emerging out of their concealment and coalescing into larger units, gave effective help during the operations.

By the evening of April 13th—ten days after the German landing at Hangö—the nightmare was lifted from Helsingfors; and on the next day, General von der Goltz entered the capital in state, greeted with an enthusiasm which knew no bounds. This must be seen psychologically against the background of

the Red Terror of the past eleven weeks ; and the fact that much was saved in Helsingfors as a result of the German intervention is, of course, indisputable. But there were also unfavourable sides to the situation which was thus created. Pro-Germanism received a tremendous fillip in Helsingfors ; the perfection and invincibility of the German army became an axiom. We shall see what difficulties before long were to spring from this for true Finnish patriotic sentiment as represented by Gustaf Mannerheim.

We will now turn to the development of the situation as seen and directed from the Finnish G.H.Q. after the capture of Tammerfors.

It will be recalled that the Commander-in-Chief never lost sight of the most important strategic move of the whole campaign—the enveloping of the enemy along the Russian frontier across the Carelian Isthmus, through which ran the only two railways that linked up the Finnish railway system with St. Petersburg. So important was to him this sector of the front, that, as we saw, even before he was completely master of Tammerfors, he had hastened there and back by rail on April 5th. That day was, incidentally, signalized by a brilliant success on a distant point on the Carelian front : at Rautus, a Russian raiding force was completely annihilated as a result of the equally bold and skilful tactics of the local Finnish Command. The carnage in the ‘ Valley of Death ’ at Rautus brought the Russian casualties in this battle up to a total of four hundred, and seven hundred prisoners were taken, besides much booty. After that lesson, no more raids from across the frontier were tried by the Russians.

No sooner had Tammerfors fallen, than the Commander-in-Chief divided his armed forces into two main groups, an Eastern army and a Western army ; and, in conformity with the ideas he had been harbouring, attributed the more important function to the Eastern army. An indication of the fact, that the south-east of Finland was henceforth to be the real pivot of operations, was supplied by the transference of the

G.H.Q. on April 10th—four days after the fall of Tammerfors—to the little city of St. Michel, a quiet provincial capital, situated on a narrow inlet of Lake Saimen. The command of the Eastern army was given to Major-General Löfström, himself a native of Carelia: and he again at once proceeded to establish his staff headquarters at Elisenvaara, a railway station immediately west of Lake Ladoga, and marking the point where the continuation of the Haapamäki-Pieksämäki line joins the railways of Carelia. Night and day the troop trains now came rolling across Finland, down to Elisenvaara and beyond: for many of them St. Andreae was the terminus, at which point the troops were transferred to a flotilla of barges, which brought them down to the River Vuoksen to a point due east of Wiborg—the great, individual prize of the operations in this part of Finland. Arms and supplies of all kinds naturally kept arriving by the same route: if until then the needs of the Carelian front had inevitably been brushed aside in favour of that of the Tammerfors operation, this was now being fully made up for. On April 19th, the left wing of the Eastern army started a swift advance, which by April 24th carried it to the south-easternmost limit of Finnish territory: on that day was occupied the frontier bathing-resort of Terijoki, notorious in Russia's war of aggression against Finland in 1939-1940 as the alleged seat of Stalin's puppet government for Finland. The other moves in this great operation will be dealt with in due course; meanwhile a few words must be said about developments in the western war-theatre.

The second army created after the fall of Tammerfors—the Western army—was placed under the command of Major-General Wetzzer. One important task which fell to it was to resist the furious attacks which now were being launched against the Lembois front from the south: and although the defence was put to a very difficult test, it succeeded in resisting the onslaughts. The westernmost sector of this army, under the command of Major-General Linder, also had to meet some very violent attacks: these were,

however, withstood, and, the Reds having begun to retreat, the important port and trading-centre of Björneborg, at the mouth of the River Kumo, was captured without much difficulty on April 13th. Further progress was quickly made in this neighbourhood, the harbour city of Raumo passing into the hands of the Whites on April 17th.

Operating further south, a volunteer force, known as the Archipelago Free Corps—it was recruited from the archipelago between Åland and the Finnish mainland—had in the first half of April, partly in conjunction with the German force, landed at Åland as long ago as March 7th, been achieving some valuable results. Foremost of these in importance must be reckoned the capture of Åbo on April 13th—the unaided effort of the Archipelago Free Corps—followed soon afterwards by the capture of Nystad. From the west, the Reds were thus being hemmed in with increasing effectiveness.

At this stage reference must be made to one of the most extraordinary symptoms of the Red psychosis during these tragic months in Finland—the attempted forcible evacuation of the south-western part of the country. On realizing that the game was up, the Red leaders put forward a gigantic plan, the utterly fantastic character of which shows what a state of exaltation was theirs, and how completely their minds had got divorced from reality: unless, indeed, the whole thing was one colossal fraud. Probably, however, it was the not unusual case of a mingling of self-deceit and deception of others. The plan aimed at nothing less than transporting the entire Red proletariat of Finland out of the country. The intention was first to settle it in Russian Carelia, in the Province of Olonetz—thus in immediate proximity to Finland; but soon over-excited imagination outstripped all boundaries—it was far-away Siberia, practically inaccessible across the intervening chaos in Russia, which was to be the new Promised Land for the workers of Finland. And not only the people were to go: everything movable, whoever it belonged to, was to be brought along as well—the contents of the houses,

of the shops, of the factories. That which could not be shifted was to be destroyed; and indiscriminate murder of all who did not belong to the proletariat was the order of the day. Count Douglas, one of the Swedish officers in the Finnish G.H.Q., has truly called this combination of 'strategic retreat, *Völkerwanderung* and pillaging on a large scale,' one of the greatest tragedies that the history of the World War can chronicle.

Fortunately the area still under the control of the Reds where the realization of this insane scheme could be attempted was, by now, relatively restricted, nor was there a great deal of time to spare: imagination boggles at the thought of what the frenzied masses otherwise might have achieved. It was mainly a case of a strip of country across about half southern Finland, from the Bothnian coast eastward; and most of the worst excesses were contained within a period of two to three weeks. Still, as this cataclysm overtook one of the most prosperous parts of Finland, cultivated and developed for centuries, there was plenty of scope within which the mass hysteria of the Finnish Reds could vent itself. A full account of this harrowing episode would be out of place in the present connexion; but a few incidents typical of what took place must be related, in order to provide the requisite period colour to this phase of the Red rising in Finland; and also, fortunately, in order to emphasize by contrast the national solidarity and discipline with which Finland is meeting adversity to-day.

A vast number of railway vans, which got immobilized at Tavastehus station and were retaken by the Whites at the end of April, conveyed a good idea of the thoroughness with which the neighbourhood had been ransacked. There were vans full of bales of various kinds of woven materials; others were piled high with foodstuffs—flour, sugar, coffee, salted herrings, and so on; others again were brimful with different descriptions of leather, with sewing-machines and all sorts of engines. Telephone microphones had been searched for wherever they could be found in private or public ownership,

and packed up with the utmost care. There were untold quantities of arms and ammunition ; and one van presented a truly gruesome sight—it was full of dead cattle. Obviously, nobody had looked after their food and water, and so the poor beasts had been left to die of hunger and thirst.

Elsewhere, the pillaging went hand in hand with efforts at destruction, singularly reminiscent of the Paris Commune. Petrol was used freely for the drenching of houses and goods to which fire then was set. In the village of Lauttakylä, for instance, one hundred barrels of meat were thus treated ; barrels of herrings were thrown into the river, a sawmill and flourmill (with three hundred sacks of flour) were burnt down. At length, on hearing a rumour that the Whites were approaching, the plunderers fled : but not before they had emptied 80,000 lbs. of flour into the river, whose surface for miles was covered with the substance, precious beyond all others in a country in the grip of famine.

Again, in the market town of Vammala, the inhabitants were first locked up in the cellars of the houses ; they were then set on fire. The entire place was burnt down, and the whole population would have met a terrible death had not at the last moment a White force appeared on the scene and saved it.

In most cases, however, the Whites were powerless to help and could only from behind the front, still unbroken, watch the columns of smoke issuing from the villages which the Reds, having first emptied of all they could carry with them, set on fire. Of the countless brutal murders which belong to this late phase of the Red Terror it is impossible even to attempt to give an idea : but one may be quoted. M. Gösta Björkenheim, the director of the largest industrial plant of Finland at Kymmene, was placed under arrest immediately on the outbreak of the revolution. He was a true philanthropist, expending untold care on the welfare of his workmen. One day he was marched off by the Reds ; a young doctor, popular with the Reds because he had attended upon their wounded with success, volunteered to accompany

him, in the hopes that this might act as a protection. On reaching the Kymmene River, the two were, however, summarily shot; their bodies were stripped and thrown into the river; their clothes were later put up for sale by auction.

The winding-up of the campaign in the part of Finland across which the unexampled and tragic mass movements just described were taking place, offered a problem of great complexity. The sequence of events will probably be most easily apprehended if the final operations in this war-theatre are now set out, from beginning to end, without any side glance at the fighting elsewhere: though it should always be borne in mind that the Wiborg campaign was brought to a finish a couple of days before the campaign which immediately concerns us. One difference, incidentally, between the two campaigns lies in this, that in the Wiborg campaign no German troops were employed, whereas they played an important part in the campaign of which an outline is about to be given.

Of the two main German forces, operating in the south of Finland, it will be remembered that the Baltic division, under General von der Goltz, had captured Helsingfors by April 13th; whereas Colonel von Brandenstein's detachment had effected a landing at Lovisa, east of Helsingfors, in two relays, April 7th and 11th—there was yet to be a third relay, on April 15th. On the day when the Baltic division first entered Helsingfors, April 12th—Colonel von Brandenstein began an advance straight north, aiming at capturing the main railway line from west to east between the city of Lahtis and the important junction of Kouvola. Strong Red forces were operating on all sides, and although Colonel von Brandenstein was able to reach the railway, and destroy it effectively at Nyby station, he found himself so hard pressed by superior Red forces that he had to fall back on April 15th. Having received some reinforcements, he was able to resume his advance, and on April 19th achieved a considerable success, capturing the city of Lahtis after some serious fighting. About

five hundred prisoners were taken and a large quantity of war material fell into the hands of the victors. The immediate importance of this success lay in the fact that it cut the remaining Red territory into two: contact with Manner, the dictator in Wiborg, was henceforth only maintained at Lahtis by means of messages which the latter caused to be dropped from aeroplanes. Another important advantage now secured was that of contact with the Finnish Western army: the day after Colonel von Brandenstein had captured Lahtis, a venturesome officer of that army, Major Kalm, arrived, from the north, at Lahtis too, at the head of a company of the 1st North Tavastland Battalion, having accomplished a most daring expedition, undertaken against orders. Communication by telephone with the G.H.Q. at St. Michel was now also quickly established.

On the same day as Colonel von Brandenstein captured Lahtis, General von der Goltz detached a force under Major-General Wolf which was to proceed from Helsingfors in a northward direction, with orders to capture the railway junction at Riihimäki. On the way, the Reds put up a strong resistance at Hyvinge, which, however, fell to the Germans on April 21st; and the next day saw them masters of Riihimäki, which the Reds hastily abandoned, massacring, however, a large number of their White prisoners before decamping.

At this stage the arrangement according to which the German troops in Finland were to take their orders from the Finnish Commander-in-Chief, began to be carried out in more than a general fashion by the Baltic division. In conformity with instructions, issued by Gustaf Mannerheim, Major-General Wolf did not therefore—as he had intended—proceed to the east from Riihimäki towards Lahtis, but advanced towards the north, in the direction of Tavastehus. This meant that he would be approaching the troops of the Western army under Major-General Wetzer, thus taking the strong Red forces, still concentrated to the south of Lembois, between two fires. Towards the east, the Commander-in-Chief

intended the troops of Major-General Linder to cut off the retreat of the Red troops at Hauho and Tuulos.

Unfortunately, circumstances intervened to make Major-General Wetzer change, on his own, the dispositions of the Commander-in-Chief, so that a gap between Hauho and Tuulos remained open: hence, when on April 25th the Red troops began to retreat towards the south-east, they were able to make good their escape for the time being. Simultaneously, a chaotic exodus was taking place from Tavastehus, in the direction of Lahtis, the fugitives setting fire to the city as they left. Tavastehus was captured by Major-General Wolf, after a heavy bombardment, on April 26th, presenting, when entered, an extraordinary picture of ruthless destruction mingled with reckless piling up of supplies; some hints as to the scene offered by this ancient provincial capital, on the departure of the Reds, were given on a preceding page. The advance troops of the Western army of Finland entered Tavastehus from the north-west the next day. Thus contact had been established between Finns and Germans at yet another point: and meanwhile, the Lembois front, so long a source of danger to the Whites and a scene of violent fighting, had utterly collapsed. The whole railway line from Helsingfors up north was again available for use.

The greatest setback that the Germans were to experience during their campaign in Finland occurred shortly after the capture of Tavastehus. On April 27th, Major-General Wolf sent a detachment in pursuit of the Reds in a north-easterly direction. Part of this detachment, reinforced with a Finnish battalion, was, in the afternoon of April 28th, unexpectedly attacked by some Red forces, retreating from the Lembois front towards the south-east. Fighting desperately, the Reds succeeded in breaking through the German position: as a result the Germans had to beat a hasty retreat, leaving behind them their one gun and three machine-guns. The Finnish battalion also got involved in the catastrophe, suffering heavy casualties.

Worse was to follow: for the main German force in this

district—stationed at a place called Syrjäntaka—became subjected to extremely heavy pressure on the part of the Reds, who long succeeded in warding off such reinforcements as were being sent in order to retrieve the position. Again the Reds forced the Germans to retreat, capturing two mine-throwers and three machine-guns: indeed, at one moment a complete collapse of the Germans looked imminent. It was not until the next day that the situation definitely changed for the better, though again the Reds gave a particularly good account of themselves in the fighting: and the bulk of their forces managed to effect their retreat in the direction of Lahtis. The losses of the Germans in these two days of fighting amounted to a couple of hundred men.

The liquidation of this part of the campaign was, however, by now, not far distant. The available German and Finnish resources were drawn upon in order to complete the encirclement of the Red forces in the neighbourhood of Lahtis. A vigorous sortie made from Lahtis by Colonel von Brandenstein on May 1st brought about the surrender of the Red forces encamped immediately to the west of the city, while the following day the Commander of the Red forces in this neighbourhood, having made desperate efforts to break through in the direction of Lahtis, had to surrender as well. The annihilation of the Red Western army was complete: and the captures of war material were, relatively speaking, on an enormous scale. Fifty guns, two hundred machine-guns, two fully equipped armoured trains and several aeroplanes fell into the hands of the victors; in addition, many thousand horses and vehicles were taken, and the total of prisoners amounted to some 20,000. This number includes, however, the masses of civilians who, in association with the Red army properly speaking, had started upon their fantastic exodus bound for the new Promised Land. The number of prisoners in a military sense was probably in the neighbourhood of 10,000.

The victory of Lahtis brought to an end the participation of German troops in the Finnish War of Independence—a

participation which had covered exactly a month. The German troops were, however, not withdrawn from Finland on the conclusion of their operations; and the various complications entailed by their continued presence in Finland will claim notice more than once in the pages which follow.

We will now turn to a consideration of the great operation in south-eastern Finland which led to the capture of Wiborg—a capture which figures as the first item of the order of the day which General von der Goltz issued to his troops on April 30th when outlining the military action which was to bring about the victory of Lahtis.

The operation against Wiborg, in the strict sense of the word, started in the night between April 23rd and 24th. As we saw, the left wing of the Eastern army had, ever since April 19th, as a preparatory measure, cut the communications of the Reds with Russia via the Carelian Isthmus, reaching Terijoki on the Gulf of Finland on the 24th. Rather more than a month had thus elapsed since the operation against Tammerfors had commenced; this, naturally, provided very different climatic conditions, all the more so as Wiborg lies a good deal to the south of Tammerfors. Snow and ice were no longer factors to be reckoned with in the military situation. Also, the country across which the operations were taking place was very different from that of the neighbourhood of Tammerfors. It was much flatter, and such rocky ridges as did occur were much less high; lakes, though plentiful, were much smaller. Yet another important difference sprang from the fact that this was no longer inland country, but rose out of the waters of the Gulf of Finland, Wiborg being an important harbour city at the northern end of a deep inlet from the main bay, known as the Bay of Wiborg. The characteristic, picturesque archipelago fringes the coast; the city is intersected by water and, further towards the north, links up through the canal known as the Saima Canal with one of the principal water systems of Finland. There is nothing about Wiborg of the sense of inland remoteness and seclusion

which surrounds Tammerfors : everywhere there is a feeling of freedom, of movement, of unhampered communications with the wide world. And, at the time when Gustaf Mannerheim's great strategic idea was on the point of being realized, gone were the long, dark winter nights—there was spring in the air, and the light and warmth of the returning midnight sun.

The White force, which, as we saw, had been concentrated at a point due east of Wiborg—in the neighbourhood of a place called Heinjoki—was under the command of Major-General Wilkman, who, it will be remembered, had distinguished himself in the fighting round Tammerfors. It was this force which struck the first blow at Wiborg, starting the advance in the night between April 23rd and 24th. It was divided into three columns ; and the vanguard of the first column, moving forward with tremendous *élan*, captured one line of fortifications after the other, and at seven o'clock in the morning of the 24th, found itself in control of the strongly fortified position at Tali, a railway station some five miles north-east of Wiborg. The success was energetically pressed home by the main body of the column, which later in the day reached a narrow arm of the Bay of Wiborg, on the other side of which lay the main part of the city itself. From here, however, further advance proved impossible for the time being. As to the other two columns, the second advanced along the Wiborg-St. Petersburg railway line, and did succeed, after hard fighting, in carrying the stations of Kämärä and Sääniö in the course of the day : but further progress was impossible in face of the violent fire of the Reds. The third column successfully accomplished its task of seizing that part of the Wiborg-St. Petersburg railway east of Kämärä which was not yet in the possession of the Whites.

Meanwhile, within Wiborg, a daring coup had been carried out by a handful of brave and determined, if poorly-armed men, belonging to the local Defence Corps. They managed, in the morning of the 24th, to seize the eastern batteries of the citadel of Wiborg : but in the absence of any support from

the outside, they could not hold out for long, and had to surrender. They were shut up in the old medieval castle of Wiborg, which, having seen so many centuries of fighting, was still raising its tall, massive tower towards the sky, proudly surveying the most recent fighting at its feet during the long, sunny April days and the nights lit up by shell-fire. We shall hear of these men again, before the story of the siege, now being told, is over.

Even though Wiborg had not been carried in the first onrush, the attackers had, nevertheless, at the outset, secured a number of highly important advantages, and the question was now, how best to follow them up. During the next three days all possible steps were taken by the Whites in order to form so strong a ring round the city that there would be no chance of a break-through of the besieged forces towards the west, in the direction of Lahtis. The withering fire, which on the 24th had prevented the advance of the first column of Major-General Wilkman's force, was still kept up during the 25th and 26th, and against it all the bravery of the attackers was of no avail.

Conditions inside Wiborg were growing more and more terrible; the city was crowded with Red fugitives, quartered in various public buildings like the Court of Appeal, the lovely Louis XVI edifice where Gustaf Mannerheim's grandfather had been the first to occupy the presidential chair. The hopelessness of the military situation was obvious to the Red leaders: and in the night of April 26th, practically all of them drew the only conclusion which, in their view, the existing conditions demanded—they sought their safety in flight. A steamer and two steam yachts took this precious cargo down the coast of the Bay of Wiborg and the Gulf of Finland straight to Kronstadt, where Kullervo Manner, Colonel Svetshnikoff, Otto Kuusinen and *tutti quanti* were received with the firing of salutes by the ships of the Russian Baltic Fleet and under the acclamations of their crews. The next day, the only Red leader of importance now left in Wiborg, Dr. Gylling made an ineffectual attempt to negotiate a

surrender to the besieging army : he then went into hiding, eventually reappearing, years after, as the President of the notorious ' East Carelian Soviet Republic,' under Moscow ægis. The degree in which the mob eventually got out of hand is strikingly shown by a tragic episode of the last phase of the siege of Wiborg. A number of White civilians, arrested by the Reds, had for weeks been kept in the Provincial Gaol at Wiborg. On the evening of April 27th this gaol was rushed by a savage crowd, which proceeded to murder these defenceless prisoners, revolvers and hand grenades being used for that purpose. About thirty victims were claimed by this massacre.

When this happened, Wiborg did not, however, have to wait much longer to be set free. Everything was ready for the final action, and in the night which followed, the White troops commenced their storm of the city. The eastern suburbs were captured in the course of April 28th, the Red troops having retired to the citadel of Wiborg. The next day, Red resistance was very lame, and the centre of the city soon fell into the hands of the attackers. But during the night there had yet occurred events, marking the last flare-up among the Reds of the passion to fight.

The Reds in Wiborg knew that there yet remained in Finland one Red position strongly held—the line running from the junction Kouvola, to the west of Wiborg, on the Helsingfors-Wiborg line, to the harbour city of Kotka on the Gulf of Finland. If a break-through in this direction were effected, it was hoped that via Kotka an escape by sea to Russia might be possible. An enormous mass of people—soldiers and civilians, men, women, and children, all in hopeless confusion, therefore tried in the night between April 28th and 29th to force a passage through the White lines to the west of Wiborg. Stout resistance was, however, offered, and violent fighting developed : in the end, the fugitives had to give up their attempt, and surrendered on the morning of the 29th. The sum total of prisoners, taken during the various operations in and around Wiborg, came to about 12,000 to

15,000; and the captures of war material were enormous—some 300 guns, 200 machine-guns, and so on.

When Wiborg woke up on April 29th, a sight never seen before met the eye. From the great tower of the Castle—the tower of St. Olaf—there flew the flag of Finland. The Whites imprisoned in the Castle had, profiting by the demoralization which had spread among the garrison, seized control of the historic fortress, arresting their crestfallen gaolers: a flag of Finland was quickly improvised, and, for the first time in history, run up on the great tower, greeting the new day.

Two days later, on May 1st—the day celebrated since time immemorial in Scandinavia as the festival of spring—Gustaf Mannerheim entered Wiborg as victor, attended a thanksgiving service, and reviewed his troops. The very locality of the thanksgiving service was significant. Wiborg, often besieged, had only once in its history been captured by an enemy. That was in 1709, when, after a heroic defence, it surrendered to Peter the Great, by whom the terms of capitulation were shamefully violated. The venerable fifteenth-century cathedral of the city was seized by the Czar, and turned into a military granary: generation after generation grew up in Wiborg, smarting under the indignity of seeing the city's chief church desecrated and with a Russian sentry posted outside it. It was in this building that the thanksgiving service was held on May 1st, 1918: there had been no time to put right the effects of two centuries of vandalism, the bare interior was sordid to a degree: but no temple resplendent with gold and marble could have meant to a Finn what the ravaged shell of Wiborg Cathedral meant on that glorious spring day.

Gustaf Mannerheim's proclamation to his army found the very words and accents which the occasion demanded:

'On arriving in Wiborg, the ancient capital of Carelia, on seeing the proud Castle of Torkel—for centuries the sure shield of Finland against the onslaught of foreign hordes,

until, two hundred years ago, it fell into the hands of the Russians—on seeing this, my mind was filled with a sense of joy and gratitude. For now the banner of Finland waves over this fortress, and once again Wiborg shall be our sure shield against the East, but not, like in the past, as part of another empire, but in a great, free, independent Finland. With your blood, brave army, Finland has now acquired a position equal to that of the other nations of Europe. With his head held up, the Finn can now walk about as master in his own house. I hope that the troops of the Finnish army, which in a common effort have shed their blood in the battle for our beloved country, now have formed that comradeship-in-arms and gained that unity which alone can create an army, relied upon by the people, feared by the enemy. . . . May also the blood which we have spent in order to gain our independence serve to raise the whole of our nation above all pettiness, above all such strife as divides and weakens, and may the patriotic feeling of our people, through this war of independence, be raised so high that we all, in noble rivalry, endeavour to give our country all that is best and noblest in us. That national enthusiasm and readiness to make sacrifices, that magnificent will to strain every effort, that bravery and that strong confidence in the future which the people of Finland have shown during this war—these qualities provide the guarantee that our future is built on a firm foundation.’

It is remarkable, indeed, how, at the moment of a great military triumph, the thought of Gustaf Mannerheim goes far beyond the immediate cause for rejoicing. It will be remembered how, in the course of Finland’s struggle for her constitutional rights, Wiborg had played a particularly heroic part; how, for instance, nearly the whole of the Court of Appeal of Wiborg had been sent to a Russian prison for refusing to disobey the laws of Finland. Gustaf Mannerheim had not forgotten this: and when entertained at a public banquet by the City of Wiborg later on this same May 1st, the

speech he delivered on this occasion stressed the importance of Finland's passive resistance most admirably. "I wish," he said, "above all to remember all those who for decades have fought and struggled for our country, those who have sacrificed all that is dearest to them, and who all in noble self-sacrifice have competed with one another. . . . My thoughts and feelings go to all law-abiding and unflinching fighters for the freedom of Finland, who have not hesitated to sacrifice themselves for their country, as also to those who have fallen on the field of battle." Thus speaks a man who is not solely a great military leader, but also the true leader of a nation.

Among those who witnessed the review at Wiborg was Sophie Mannerheim, who now at last had been able to rejoin her brother, under conditions so utterly different from those under which they parted in January. How she felt on seeing him at the head of his victorious troops, in the ancient city which he had freed, and with which their family had special ties, is best shown by the brief telegram she sent to some friends in Helsingfors: 'Seen the review at Wiborg. Happy.' From Wiborg she accompanied her brother to the G.H.Q. at St. Michel, and from there, on May 5th, wrote a letter which gives a vivid impression of the life and conditions there and of the feelings which animated everybody:

'Gustaf . . . is tremendously busy, but I must say he is admirable, available for everything and everybody, never tired, always buoyant and looking as if he were thirty. It is wonderful, and I feel so proud of him. I know that no one else here in this country could have done what he has done, and his soldiers look as if they idolized him. And such soldiers! . . . It is our Finnish people, its healthy core which has shaken off the rotten part and now will rise as if born again after this unspeakably terrible time.

'Now there will be work, constructive work for all who can take part in it. God give, that there were now an end to division and strife, and that real unity could be attained, without narrow, personal and party points of view.

‘I probably go back home to-morrow, if Gustaf doesn’t need me, with new strength after having seen him!’

Her brother had, indeed, every need of her, of her expert knowledge of all matters pertaining to nursing and the organization of hospitals, of her understanding of the psychology of the average Finn of humble condition, as it had developed in years of contact with the patients of her great hospital in Helsingfors. Her reactions to all the tragic implications of a sight such as that of the vast prisoners’ camp at Lahtis were on the same plane as his; and it naturally made no difference to the attitude of brother and sister that just now, with the return of freedom and justice, tangible evidence, long suppressed, of the horrors of the Red regime was coming to light in gruesome plentifulness.

One of the worst centres of atrocities in Finland was Kouvola, an important railway station between Lahtis and Wiborg, whence—as already mentioned—a branch line runs southwards to the city of Kotka on the Gulf of Finland. A number of important pulp and paper factories exist in the neighbourhood, harnessing the water power of the River Kymmene: among them Kuusankoski, founded by the Commander-in-Chief’s father, and Kymmene, directed by M. Björkenheim, whose tragic death has already been referred to. Hundreds of White civilians, belonging to the population of these communities and also of the city of Fredrikshamn, the former home of the Finnish Corps of Cadets, had been arrested by the Reds and concentrated at Kouvola. Among these, fearful massacres took place towards the end of April, the victims being subsequently either thrown into the river or hastily buried in the neighbouring fields, some of them while still alive. Fredrikshamn, for instance, in this fashion, lost its mayor, vicar, medical officer, and postmaster. Here was obviously a case which called for quick action by the Whites; and on April 30th Major-General Linder was ordered to capture Kouvola and, proceeding from there to the south, subdue the Red forces at Kotka and Fredrikshamn.

This last strategic operation of the War of Independence was carried out with lightning speed, thanks to the masterly dispositions of the Commander-in-Chief and the energy and 'drive' of Major-General Linder. Kouvola fell on May 3rd, the Reds retiring towards Kotka. The pursuit was punctuated by surrenders on the part of the Reds, and finally Kotka was reached on the 4th, capitulating without a fight. True to the traditions of the French Commune, though probably ignorant of them, some of the Reds had placed barrels of tar in readiness to light a blaze which would destroy the enormous quantities of timber which existed at Kotka, one of the principal centres of the Finnish timber trade; the Reds were thereupon to seek safety on three Russian ships, which were expected at any moment and which were to carry their load of fugitives to the Soviet paradise. This arrangement with the Russians had an amusing sequel. General Linder relates how, on occupying Kotka, the White Command either forgot, or was too busy, to see to the hoisting of the Finnish flag. As a result, when the three Russian ships—one of them a guard vessel, armed with two guns and machine-guns—shortly afterwards arrived, they proceeded into harbour, since there was nothing to indicate that Kotka had ceased to be Red. They were now easily captured by the Whites, who, incidentally, learnt that one of the ships a few days earlier had taken a large cargo of plunder to Russia.

Meanwhile, Fredrikshamn, after being evacuated by the Reds, had been captured on the same day by forces detached by Major-General Linder for this purpose. Two days had sufficed to secure possession of Kouvola, Kotka, and Fredrikshamn; the captures were very large—9,000 prisoners, 51 guns, 120 machine-guns and mine-throwers, two armoured trains, more than 10,000 rifles, three million cartridges, and a considerable quantity of shells. Most important of all, through the quickness of action, pillage and destruction in the prosperous Kymmene Valley had been avoided in a remarkable degree.

The telegram from the Commander-in-Chief to Major-

General Linder was as well earned as graceful : ' I thank you and your brave troops, which have captured the last position of the enemy in our country.'

In point of fact, there did, however, remain one more enemy position in Finland—the fortifications of Ino, on the Bay of Finland, close to the Russian frontier. These had been constructed towards the end of the Czarist regime and were up-to-date in every respect and of enormous strength : they were now held by a garrison of about eight hundred Russians. It is symptomatic of the demoralization which had taken place in the Russian army that a position of this importance could be left to be dealt with by a small Finnish cavalry force, which had to indulge in an elaborate game of bluff. Lengthy negotiations took place : finally, on May 13th, an ultimatum was delivered to the garrison, which withdrew the next day, after having blown up part of the fortifications. On May 15th the Finnish force occupied the fortifications. The war was over : Finland belonged to the Finns.

Meanwhile, the G.H.Q. had remained at St. Michel, busily engaged upon plans of military reorganization and other projects, designed to strengthen the position of Finland. One day—that was before Sophie Mannerheim had left her brother to go back to Helsingfors—a visit was paid to Kouvola, where the victims of the April massacres had been disinterred in order to be subjected to a post-mortem examination and then be given a proper burial. The impression of this ghastly spectacle was indelibly left upon Sophie Mannerheim's mind. Major-General Ignatius—promoted in recognition of his share in the success of the Wiborg operation—was of the party, too : and he has recorded the following incident which took place on this occasion : ' My eye was caught by a young woman who was crying bitterly. It was a humble peasant woman, looking for the body of her murdered husband. The woman next to her whispered : " That is Mannerheim." At those words, the face of the woman in tears lit up ; she raised her hands in prayer and said : " I thank God that I have seen the man who has freed

Finland.”’ That was, by then, instinctively, the angle on Gustaf Mannerheim of the men and women of the people : and his magnetic power over the rank and file of the army sprang not only from his unbroken record of victory, but also from the direct experience of his personal qualities. An episode from the fighting on the Carelian front is worth recounting in this connection, also because it illustrates once again the delightful freedom from convention which the common soldier in the White army would maintain in his relations with the Commander-in-Chief. The latter had advanced to a point under intense fire, where a Carelian soldier, crouching behind a granite boulder, was calmly returning the fire with his rifle, as if nothing had happened. The General raised his hand in salute and said : “I thank you for the courage you are showing.” The Carelian stopped his fire for a moment, looked at his Commander-in-Chief, and replied : “*Sitä samaa vaan*”—an idiomatic Finnish phrase, perhaps most adequately translated as “Same to you.”

A few days after the visit to Kouvola, General von der Goltz came to St. Michel to pay a call on the Finnish Commander-in-Chief. The *Memoirs* of the German Commander convey the impression of a typically Teutonic, heavy mentality, tending towards a definitely patronizing attitude, as when—unmindful of his own, not particularly distinguished record in the Finnish campaign—he refers to the ‘many generals and colonels in the hyper-elegant staff,’ over which even he must admit that ‘General Mannerheim rose as a form and personality, slender and elegant, reserved, but a man of the world.’ During this visit a memorable dialogue occurred, recorded by General Ignatius.

“At Syrjäntaka,” said the latter to the German Commander, “your troops were beaten by our Reds, and although I deplore the loss of so many brave men, yet I also rejoiced at what happened.”

“How is that? What do you mean?” asked the German General.

“Why, they are my fellow-countrymen,” answered General

Ignatius, "and I am pleased at their military efficiency. From Hangö to Helsingfors you met with no fighting worth speaking of, but at Syrjäntaka you had a first taste of the resistance we have had to break down at Tammerfors and Wiborg."

That, then, was the feeling at the White G.H.Q. at the end of the campaign of 1918: and in it we may seek the key to the understanding of the flawless solidarity of the army of Finland in the campaign of 1939-40.

We must now for a moment turn to consider developments which had taken place in Helsingfors. The Vasa Government had urged for a while that it would be advisable to call a meeting of the Diet, not at Helsingfors, but at Vasa, there to transact some urgent business—above all, the election of a Regent who would succeed to the prerogatives which, according to the existing constitution of Finland, belonged to the sovereign. Thereupon the Diet would be dissolved, and only after the country had had time to settle down would there be new elections for a Diet which was to frame the future constitution for Finland.

This programme had sprung from the sentiments of intense patriotism and disgust with the past which had prevailed in Vasa; but it was not to be carried out.

Under the influence of political currents which quickly gained strength in the newly-freed capital, it was decided to move the Government back to Helsingfors, and to summon the Diet to resume its labours in the ordinary way. The members of the Vasa Government returned to Helsingfors at the beginning of May, and the meeting of the Diet was fixed for May 15th. At the same time there was obviously a call for a great celebration of the victorious issue of the War of Independence; hence it was arranged that on the following day the Commander-in-Chief would enter Helsingfors in state at the head of a representative selection of troops of the White army. The date, as it turned out, gained a peculiar appositeness, for on the previous day Finnish soldiers occupied the fortress of Ino, there being thus no longer a

Russian left on Finnish soil when May 16th dawned. There was great life and movement in the streets of the capital during the days immediately preceding: from all parts of Finland soldiers were arriving, offering in their simple grey or brown field uniforms a sight as novel as it was welcome to the inhabitants of Helsingfors, still largely unfamiliar with the Finnish army, formed and trained far away from them.

On May 15th the Commander-in-Chief, on his way to Helsingfors, returned the call of General von der Goltz at Riihimäki and then proceeded further towards his destination. The day as it happened was the day of St. Sophia in the Finnish calendar; and following the traditional Scandinavian custom, there was a party at Sophie Mannerheim's. It can be imagined in what spirits the hostess and the guests met. Officers, fresh from their exploits on the fields of battle, kept on arriving: the question everyone asked them was: "Where is Mannerheim?" The answer came cheerily: he was quite near, in the suburb of Fredriksberg: he had even for a moment thought of slipping into Helsingfors incognito, to join the party at his sister's, but on reflection had decided not to anticipate his formal entry fixed for the next day.

The layout of the principal quarters of Helsingfors having been effected during the first half of the nineteenth century, in the spirit of town planning prevailing during the Empire period, there is a spaciousness and monumental quality about it which are ideal for a great military function. It was arranged that the Commander-in-Chief was to ride into the city, followed by his soldiers, along the long straight road entering Helsingfors from the north-west, and proceed to the great central Senate Square, three sides of which are occupied by one single building each, in a uniform, noble and imposing neo-Classical style: the Senate, or Government House; facing it, the University; and between the two, dominating the scene, the colonnaded and many-domed Nicholas Church, effectively placed on an eminence reached by an enormous flight of steps. The functions were to conclude with the march past of the entire army, the Commander-in-Chief taking

the salute at a central point of the street known as the Norra Esplanadgatan.

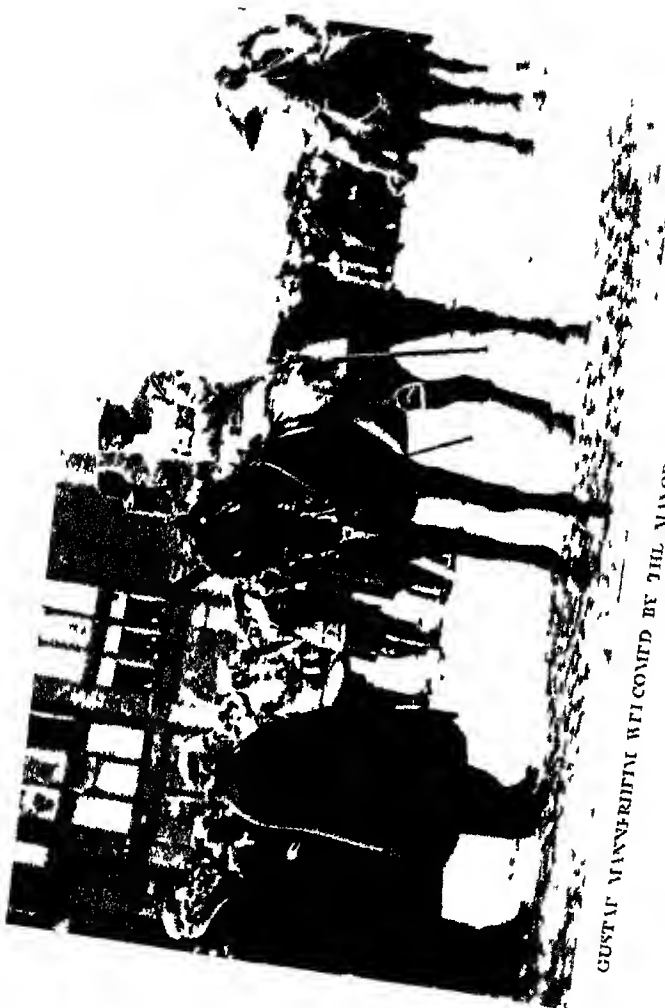
Thursday, May 16th, 1918, broke radiant over Helsingfors. Already at an early hour large crowds of people were on the move, intent upon taking up their positions from which to watch the Commander-in-Chief and his troops, the latter meanwhile gradually assembling in readiness for the march into the capital: all combatants from the storming of Tammerfors again wore branches of spruce in their caps. Everywhere banners and flags were flying, the city wearing its most festive aspect.

Shortly before noon, Gustaf Mannerheim, mounted on his horse 'Neptune,' met the officers of his Staff waiting for him at the gates of Helsingfors. After he had dismounted to discuss some final points, a characteristic incident occurred: on turning to his horse, he found that the superb animal had been wreathed in roses. On asking to whom he owed this graceful tribute, the Commander-in-Chief received no answer, until a modestly-clad man stepped out of the crowd, and said in a voice broken with emotion: "It is no one in particular; it is the whole of the people of Finland, that does homage to its liberator."

Exactly at midday, Gustaf Mannerheim, accompanied by his Staff officers, rode into Helingsfors at the head of sixteen thousand men; the guns on the historic fortress of Sveaborg outside—bombarded by the Allies in the Crimean War—were firing a salute; the military bands struck up and deafening cheers came from the crowds.

A short distance ahead, by the ruins of a large barracks hit by German shells in April, the Mayor of Helsingfors and representatives of the German Command offered a welcome. In returning thanks, the Commander-in-Chief remarked that the population of the capital no longer need look to the German comrades-in-arms for protection, but—a phrase often quoted since—'would be able to sleep calmly to the sound of the measured step of our own soldiers.'

And so the triumphal ride was resumed, under continued



GUSTAF MANNERVIK WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER, MAY 16TH, 1915



GUSTAF MANNSTRÖM ADDRESSING THE MEMBERS OF THE DHI,
MAY 16TH, 1918

ovations : at last, the Senate Square was reached, where the Commander-in-Chief, still accompanied by his Staff, mounted the steps of Government House, and proceeding to the Hall of Sessions, addressed the assembled Cabinet in these words :

“ MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT, GENTLEMEN,

“ At the head of Finland’s young victorious army I stand here to-day and greet, in its name, the Government which has gone through such chequered destinies : greet it precisely here in this ancient palace, where, exactly four months ago, Finnish officers were appointed to assume command of an army which did not exist, but which was to be created with funds voluntarily subscribed, and equipped with arms which were yet to be purchased or wrested from the enemy.

“ And, indeed, since then we have experienced a wonderful period of clash and contrast between old and new, between good and evil ; but it has been granted us, after struggle and hardship, to see the shadows give way to light ; it has been granted us to break a powerful enemy and to create for Government and people that power and that strength which are needful in order to build up again the future of our country.

“ It is in this proud consciousness that the young army of Finland marches into the Capital, and this consciousness is not lessened by the fact that the fight for our freedom, carried through by our army, has been shortened through the magnanimous intervention of Germany.

“ Gentlemen, our great task is performed, while yours commences in all its extent ; comprising problems greater than those which any Government and any Parliament in our country yet has had to solve.

“ And the solution of these great tasks is the privilege of that same Government which, last autumn, spoke the proud word about Finland as a sovereign state, and as a reward had to empty the cup of trials and visitations to the dregs, was forced to stand powerless against pillage and plunder and had helplessly to watch Finnish citizens being murdered, until finally the last shadow of power was taken from it and its

members were constrained to take flight or go into hiding. Determined that such a state of things shall never recur, the army regards it as its right to express openly its firm hope, that safeguards will be given, through the creation of a social order and an executive power of the State, which for ever will protect us against new months of terror such as those through which our country has passed. The army regards it as the only possible guarantee of this, that the helm of the ship of the Finnish State is placed in a strong hand, which is not reached by party strife, and not forced, through compromises, to whittle down the power of the Government.

"Everyone out there, in the White Army, stands full of confidence, and believes that the time which is dawning will not belie his expectations. The thousands of white crosses in our churchyards all over the country speak their silent language, and the dead demand that their sacrifice shall not have been in vain."

To this the Prime Minister made the following reply :

"GENERAL,

"When our country was in the utmost danger, when, supported by our age-long oppressors, the misguided, demoralized part of the Finnish nation rose against the legal order of society, and threatened to destroy our young freedom, the Government entrusted to you, General, the defence of the country. Under your energetic leadership the young army of Finland was created. You gave this army of the people its firm organization and implanted into it military discipline, without which no enduring results can be attained.

"And under your command the troops, inspired by flaming patriotism, breaking down the resistance of the enemy, have gone from victory to victory. The conquests of Tammerfors and Wiborg will, on the pages of history, always be recorded as brilliant victories, and at the same time as outstanding feats linked up with the liberation of Finland.

"In the name of our country, the Government thanks you

cordially, General, for all you have done to save our country and bids you welcome to the capital of the country.

“At the same time I ask you to convey the gratitude of the Government to your victorious army, from the first officer to the last man in the ranks.”

After this exchange of speeches, the Commander-in-Chief, now also accompanied by the members of the Government, returned to the Senate Square, where a number of addresses—from the Diet, the Municipal Council of Helsingfors, the Women of Helsingfors, the University Students—were read to him, each being replied to. The troops drawn up in the square were then inspected, the historic army order of the day being worth quoting in full :

“TO THE ARMY OF FINLAND !

“You were a handful of poorly-armed men who, without shrinking back before an enemy of infinite numbers, began the struggle for liberty in Ostrobothnia and Carelia. Like an avalanche the Finnish army has since grown during its victorious progress towards the south.

“The task of the army is solved. Our country is free. From the tundras of Lapland, from the remotest skerries of Åland to Systerbäck, the Lion flag is flying. The people of Finland has flung away its shackles and stands ready to take the place which properly belongs to it.

“I thank cordially all of you who have taken part in the ceaseless work of these months. Everyone has borne his burden, and we have all shared the joy of success. I thank you for your steadfastness and for confidence shown me when our cause seemed darkest. I thank you for your brave work at the front, for sleepless nights, hardships and super-human efforts. I thank the colleagues nearest to me, the generals and officers of the army, the non-commissioned officers, the rank and file, the doctors, nurses and medical orderlies, the almoners and the women who have accompanied the army and seen to its food, and all who have helped it in

the work of liberation. I thank the brave men from Sweden and other countries of the North, who have listened to the call of heart and honour, and hastened to our help, when our struggle was at its hardest, and who have so freely shed their blood for our just cause and made us recall the ties of past centuries. But first, and last, thoughts and feelings of gratitude go to those who, after hard efforts, and their duty done, now rest under the soil.

“To-day, for the first time for over a century, we have heard the roar of Finnish guns from Sveaborg: a salute for our fallen heroes, but also a message that new times have dawned. New times with new duties. And yet, now as before, great questions are settled by iron and blood. To protect our freedom, the army must be prepared. Fortresses, guns and foreign help are of little avail, if each man in the ranks does not know that it is precisely he who keeps watch for his country. May the sons of Finland remember that without unity a strong army cannot be created; and only a strong nation can face its future with security.

“Soldiers! Carry high and unstained your flag, our beautiful white banner, which has united us all and guided us to victory.”

After the inspection of the troops, it was announced that the Commander-in-Chief, with the sanction of the Government, had decided to form two regiments of the guards—the White Guards and the Carelian Guards—out of elements of the three Ostrobothnian and Carelian Regiments: the three regiments of the White Guards were to bear the names of Vörå, Vasa, and Lappo ‘in commemoration of the bravery, proved in a hundred fights, of the Vörå school, and the boys of Vasa and Lappo.’ The first regiment of Jaegers was raised to the rank of Regiment of Jaegers of the Guards.

The military part of the function in the Senate Square over, the Commander-in-Chief walked up the steps of the Nicholas Church, between rows of young girls in white, and attended a thanksgiving service. Thereupon he mounted his horse, and took up his position at the Norra Esplanadgatan, and

watched the march past of all the troops concentrated in Helsingfors for the occasion.

It was at this stage that popular enthusiasm reached its climax, as an epitome of the War of Independence moved past the man who had led these troops to victory, the whole taking place to the strains of the stirring traditional marches of the various provinces and cities of Finland. This was no army merely of the parade ground: indeed, it was distinctly deficient in many qualities connected with matters of military ceremony and display, but it was an army which had won in the field and which was Finland's own. Behind the Commander-in-Chief rose the statue of Johan Ludvig Runeberg, the poet whose songs had, generations ago, united the Finnish nation around a concept of patriotism of which this army was the living expression: the juxtaposition was one of which no spectator failed to see the symbolical significance. And certain it is that the review of May 16th, 1918, etched the figure of Gustaf Mannerheim into the hearts of all Finland as nothing before had.

CHAPTER VIII

THE AFTERMATH OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE. GUSTAF MANNERHEIM PROCEEDS ON BEHALF OF FINLAND TO ENGLAND AND FRANCE

THE Diet of Finland had, as we saw, been summoned to meet at Helsingfors the day before the White army was reviewed in the capital; and it has been mentioned that it was present, as a body, in the Senate Square on May 16th, when an address from it was read to the Commander-in-Chief. It was a very different assembly from that which had witnessed such violent scenes as lately as the end of January. Gone were nearly all the ninety-two Socialist representatives—some had fallen in the recent fighting, others had fled to Russia, and the vast majority had in any case forfeited their mandate through high treason. At first there was indeed but one Socialist member who attended, having in no way been implicated in the Red rising; and later on he was joined by another colleague, of whom the same was true. Of the members of the majority, two had been murdered by the Reds—Antti Mikkola and another, the farmer Ernst Saari, killed at Tammerfors.

To strengthen the hand of the executive was naturally, after what had happened, the wish of every non-Socialist in Finland: it was a wish to which Gustaf Mannerheim gave eloquent expression in his speech to the members of the Government on May 16th, though it will have been noticed that M. Svinhufvud was very non-committal in his reply, wholly ignoring the point as a matter of fact. Constitutionally, Finland was in an impasse when the Diet met: for the Power Law of July 18th, 1917, was still the law of the land:

and by that law it was enacted that all power in Finland (with exceptions rendered nugatory by recent developments) was to be wielded by the Diet. To meet the exigencies of the times it was therefore necessary, if a constitutional course was to be followed, that the Diet should divest itself of its powers. This, under the circumstances, presented no difficulty : and on May 18th, M. Svinhufvud was elected Regent, a title conforming with ancient Swedish usage and conferring upon him the extensive powers which sprang from the monarchical constitution of Finland—her heritage from Sweden, jealously treasured during the time of her union with Russia. M. Svinhufvud appointed as Prime Minister Dr. Paasikivi, an experienced Conservative politician, lately the head of one of Finland's most important banks ; and M. Otto Stenroth, another prominent banker, became Finland's first Foreign Secretary. Major-General Thesleff, who had brought the Jaeger battalion from Germany back to Finland, went to the War Office. For the rest, all the members of the ' Independence ' Government were retained.

The tasks which this Cabinet had to shoulder were, indeed, gigantic. The toll of destruction, entailed by the Red Terror and the War of Independence, was enormous. First as to the loss of life : the total number of deaths as a result of the actual fighting has been estimated on the part of the Whites at 3,365 ; there were in addition about 9,000 wounded. The number of White civilians murdered was over 1,300. The losses on the Red side are very difficult to compute : a possible estimate of deaths (including Russians) is 7,000. These are terrible figures for a small nation. Something has been said on previous pages about the systematic campaign of material destruction carried on by the Reds especially during a later stage of the struggle : and then, of course, there was the havoc inevitably caused by heavy shelling such as had for instance taken place round Tammerfors.

Food imports there were hardly any, and with every week that went by famine became more and more of a sinister reality in Finland. With a view to remedying the position,

the Commander-in-Chief had, as soon as the military situation made it possible, released large numbers of soldiers for the urgent tasks of the spring sowing, but of this the benefits would not materialize for some time. A great and tragic complication both as regards the labour problem and from other points of view was that of the prison camps. These were instituted for Red prisoners, both military and civilian, the total of whom reached the staggering figure of 80,000 to 90,000. All through the spring of 1918, Gustaf Mannerheim had resolutely opposed the institution of these prison camps : he urged upon the Government the course of trying but a small number of obvious criminals quickly before courts martial and sending the vast majority of Red prisoners home. This common-sense point of view did not, however, appeal to the Government, which, largely manned by lawyers, had got obsessed with the idea of pursuing a strictly legal course at all costs. Every available lawyer was pressed into the service of the State : and up and down the country trials took place, which in most cases, in the absence of any proper evidence, became almost farcical. Meanwhile, not only were thousands of much-needed arms kept idle, but the problem of feeding such large numbers of prisoners in a country where there was but little food, was an insoluble one, for all the efforts of the authorities to cope with the situation. Owing to malnutrition, and diseases more or less directly caused by it, deaths in the prison camps became more and more frequent and eventually totalled something like 10,000. It will easily be imagined how much bitterness was caused by this, even though successive measures of amnesty gradually brought down the numbers of prisoners, and the subsequent improvement in the food situation in Finland made it possible to raise the standard of alimentation in the prison camps considerably. Anyone connected with Finnish political service in the years immediately following the World War can bear witness to the capital that was made of this all over the world in quarters inimical to the existing regime in Finland ; and by the most flagrant perversion of justice, Gustaf Manner-

heim was held up, outside Finland, as responsible for these tragic developments. For this reason it cannot be sufficiently strongly stressed, that not only was he not responsible for the institution of the prison camps in Finland, but, foreseeing all the moral and material harm that would spring from them, did his utmost to prevent the Government from instituting them and pursuing its foolish method of trying to bring untold numbers of Red prisoners to judgment.

The international political position of Finland had, as a result of recent happenings, become complicated in the extreme. The attitude of the Swedish Government towards Finland was far from cordial even though, as we saw, towards the end of April an arrangement was reached between the two countries under which the Swedish troops were withdrawn from Åland. The ascendancy of Germany over Finland, also economically, was continuously growing: and this was naturally viewed with increasing disfavour by the Entente Powers. The British Government was, indeed, not oblivious of the assurances which, in February, it had given through Mr. Balfour to the Finnish mission in London; and at the end of April the British Foreign Secretary communicated to the Finnish Government a proposal which undoubtedly carried things beyond the position as outlined by him in his interview with the Finnish mission. In brief, the proposal was to the effect that, subject to the final settlement at the Peace Congress, the British Government was prepared to recognize provisionally the Finnish *de facto* Government, on condition that the latter Government would arrange for the release of all British subjects arrested by Germany on Finnish territory; give guarantees for effective Finnish neutrality, and, more especially, refrain from any armed activity directed against the Murman Railway and the adjacent territory. If these conditions were fulfilled, the British Government would send a *chargé d'affaires* to Finland. It was, perhaps, this latter point which most definitely symbolized the advance from the previous position: for it meant that relations between Great Britain and Finland would

be raised to the diplomatic plane from the consular plane. For the rest, it will be seen that the arrangement proposed did not amount to a *de jure* recognition, but was still essentially of a provisional nature. The Finnish Government, therefore, while stressing the value which it attached to British recognition, did not entertain the proposal ; and naturally, German influence, powerfully exercised on the spot, had a great deal to do with this.

As to Russia, the latter Power was, of course, passing through a phase of utter weakness ; but her potential resources remained, and Finland was still on a footing of war with her. How to deal with this situation was a matter to which Gustaf Mannerheim with characteristic foresight had given much thought long before the end of the War of Independence. He favoured, as a solution, for one thing, to seize St. Petersburg and, on the ruins of the Bolshevik regime, set up a decent Russian Government with which Finland could act in harmony and understanding ; and secondly to incorporate with Finland that part of Carelia which had belonged to Russia ever since the Middle Ages, although inhabited by people of Finnish race—in this way, Finland would acquire a shortened eastern frontier much more easy to defend than her existing frontier. His own familiarity with Russian affairs and understanding of Russia would offer guarantees that legitimate Russian interests would not be overridden ; and more particularly, he had no designs on the Murman Coast, where by that time the Allies had established themselves. As a preliminary measure towards attaining the aims here stated, Gustaf Mannerheim had, at the end of March, given orders to some free corps to cross the Finnish frontier into eastern Carelia at certain points. At the last moment it proved impossible to carry out the operation in conformity with the original plan, owing to the necessity of using some of the troops elsewhere. The Finns, who did enter eastern Carelia, met both with successes and with reverses, and, in the end, had to withdraw. According to General Ignatius, plans had however been drawn up in the G.H.Q. by the end of the War of Inde-

pendence with a view to a forthcoming invasion of eastern Carelia in a region to the south of the one affected by the earlier operations.

The necessary basis for the policy advocated by Gustaf Mannerheim was a new and efficient army organization. With the assistance of two of his Swedish Staff officers he prepared elaborate plans for such an organization, providing for nine additional regiments beyond the eighteen which existed, the whole army thus comprising nine divisions. Permanently, one third of the total strength of the army was to be held in full readiness to strike, but the existing formations would allow a general mobilization to be carried out quickly and efficiently. The army plan of which here only the general outlines have been given, was, in fact, closely analogous to the present army organization of Finland which has proved its worth so strikingly when Finland was recently attacked by Russia.

Tremendous as the impression had been which Helsingfors and indeed all Finland received from the White army, as a result of its triumphal entry into Helsingfors, yet wide circles in Finland—and especially southern Finland—retained feelings of deep gratitude towards the Germans for having disposed of the Reds in southern Finland so quickly: and, as a matter of fact, the Commander-in-Chief did not omit, in his speech to the assembled Government, to tender a graceful and dignified acknowledgment of the German help. But political sympathy with Germany and admiration for the German military machine had by now become so deeply rooted in the circles referred to, that almost every sense of proportion and prudence was lost: and this is true of many people who ought to have known better. General von der Goltz knew, of course, quite well why his Government had sent him to Finland, and, we may be sure, had no intention of leaving the country: but he could allow himself the luxury of offering the Finnish Government to go back to Germany, sure that they would ask him to stay, which indeed they did.

When, therefore, the Finnish Government consulted

General von der Goltz as to the future organization of the Finnish army and he produced a plan which turned the Finnish army virtually into an offshoot of Germany's military power, this did not take the members of the Finnish Government aback: on the contrary, that very circumstance was regarded by them as a hall-mark of military excellence.

Gustaf Mannerheim's plan provided only for a small number of non-Finnish experts and instructors, mainly from Sweden, though he would not rule out a few German officers. To this General von der Goltz was resolutely opposed: all the foreign officers in his army organization were to be Germans, and there were to be plenty of them. Again, of any attack on the Bolsheviks, the Germans, for all their vaunted 'anti-Bolshevism,' would not hear: indeed, though the fact was kept secret at the time, they went and concluded a treaty with the Russians on August 27th, by which they guaranteed that Finland would not attack Russia, if only the latter Power would undertake to drive all such Allied forces, as were still in Russia, out of the country. The leopard, it will be noticed, has not changed its spots.

Since the Finnish Government, in a moment of aberration, would not agree to the army plan safeguarding her independence and prepared by the man who had established that independence, the latter drew the only conclusion compatible with his country's and his own dignity: he resigned from his post as Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish army. His last appearance in that capacity in 1918 was on May 28th, when he reviewed and thanked the Swedish Brigade in Helsingfors, prior to its departure for Sweden. On May 31st, he issued the following army order:

'When to-day, in consequence of the discharge granted me by the Government, I relinquish my post as Commander-in Chief of the army, I direct that the Acting Chief of the General Staff, Major-General Ignatius, is to assume Command of the army, until the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief appointed by the Government.

‘ Officers and soldiers in the White army of Finland !

‘ When I to-day relinquish the Supreme Command, which I have been so proud to wield, it is with a feeling of deep emotion that I address my parting words to you, brave comrades-in-arms, whose courage and contempt for death always have called forth my admiration. Like a mighty spring tide the Finnish people’s army swept on from the north, it broke down all dikes, it struck down all resistance and would not be arrested until the goal was reached. In countless battles you have fought and bled. You have dared everything, you have sacrificed everything. On your blood-stained path from Rovaniemi to Wiborg and Terijoki, newly-dug graves of heroes speak their silent language. They show that the White army of Finland shirked no sacrifice in order to vindicate the rights of the country.

‘ Finland’s freedom is bought with your blood, it is your work. With pride you will be able to remember the names of the victories you have inscribed on the scroll of fame, the names of the heroes who now rest in the free Finnish earth. As long as the name of Finland will be mentioned in history, as long will it be related how the Finnish son of the people stepped out of the depths of his woods and wildernesses in order to fight for right and freedom by the side of his brother perhaps better favoured by fortune.

‘ Soldiers ! As your Commander-in-Chief I have had the honour of leading you in this proud and great battle. For the last time I turn to you to bid you farewell and convey my gratitude for all your sacrifices, for all your heroism, for all that blood of your heart, with which our successes have been bought. I thank you for every proud and beautiful memory from the days of our deeds and victories. While the echo of the guns of our battles has not yet died away, I address my warmest and most sincere thanks to you, the victors of Vasa, Östermyra, Uleåborg, Filpula, Lavia, Suodenniemi, Tavastkyrö, Orivesi, Tammerfors, Lembois, Varkaus, Mouhu, Rautus, Ahvola, Terijoki, Wiborg, Kouvola, Kotka and ever so many other fields of battle. I am con-

vinced, that you will never be untrue to the white colours of our banners, on which are written, Chivalry, Contempt for Death, Loyalty and Love of our Country.

‘I address a special word of thanks from my heart, to those who have stood by me, who, nearest to me, have shared the burden during this time so full of responsibility and have helped me to solve the great task of these months through their rare ability, devoted love of our country and ceaseless labour. I convey to Generals Löfström, Wetzer, Wilkman, and Linder and to Colonels Sihvo, Ausfeld and Hjalmarson, my warm and sincere thanks for so ably directing the operations of the army groups. From my heart I thank Generals Theslöf and Ignatius, who, as Chief of the General Staff and Quartermaster-General, have stood nearest to me; Lieutenant-Colonels Waldén and Serlachius, whose tried ability has helped me, under conditions of exceptional difficulty, to solve ever so many difficult problems; all departmental chiefs and the whole of my staff, which, in ceaseless work, has forgotten the difference between night and day. Once again I want to thank the Chiefs of Districts and local organizations, the women and men of Finland for their powerful help, their devoted work and the confidence shown me.

‘G. MANNERHEIM.’

Simultaneously with the Commander-in-Chief, all the members of the Military Committee—the body which, it will be remembered, had made the preparations for the War of Independence and was responsible for his appointment—and all the Swedish Staff officers handed in their resignations. In spite of rumours, which had been current for some days heralding the event, it yet came as the most profound shock to Finland. There was indignation, even despair: but in conformity with the keynote struck by Gustaf Mannerheim himself, the whole episode took place in complete and dignified calm. There were no noisy demonstrations, no wild talk of a *pronunciamento*, such as might easily indeed have been brought off. At a farewell dinner given by the members

of the G.H.Q. of the White army, General Ignatius spoke words that went from heart to heart ; and from the erstwhile critics, the Jaegers, came acknowledgments that could not have been warmer. A small group of friends saw him off, in silence, at Helsingfors station ; Sophie Mannerheim accompanied him as far as the port whence the ship took him, in the white night, across the sea to Sweden.

The next five or six months form, in many ways, one of the most depressing, not to say embarrassing, periods in recent Finnish history ; so complete is the sense of anti-climax which it produces in relation to what had preceded it, so aggravating is the feeling, continuously experienced, of opportunities lost or elementary errors committed. A brief account of the sequence of principal events in Finland during this period must, however, here be given, since it leads up to Gustaf Mannerheim's second great performance in the service of Finland.

If we first consider the great nation-wide military organization, built up by the White leader from a profound understanding of Finland's authentic needs and possibilities, we shall find that it was now handed over to German 'experts' to refashion at will in accordance with their pet theories. The position of Commander-in-Chief was henceforth vested in that of the new Regent, M. Svinhufvud : while the military leadership of the army went to Major-General Wilkman, a capable enough soldier, as shown by his record in the War of Independence, but possessing none of the characteristics of a national leader. The post of Chief of the General Staff was held for a while by Colonel Procopé, a Finnish officer, but on his relinquishing it in August, a German officer, Colonel von Redern was appointed in his stead, his official description being characteristically 'Chief of the German Staff of the Finnish Army.' Without respite General von der Goltz was, not unnaturally from his point of view, working in the interests of the German army in every direction, acquiring a tremendous personal ascendancy over M. Svinhufvud.

Early in July he presented to the Regent the draft of a full-fledged Military Convention between Germany and Finland which provided for the employment of the Finnish army on 'Germany's northern or eastern War Theatre' while its use on 'other War Theatres' would be a matter of arrangement. Fortunately, the negotiations regarding this Convention never got beyond the preliminary stage.

While the organization of the defence corps was allowed to fall into decay, there was the utmost keenness in securing German control over important strategic points. Various islands in the Gulf of Finland were occupied by German detachments; and in the far north of Finland, one detachment held Rovaniemi. Here the strategic concerns of the German High Command came out with the utmost clarity: it was the Allied occupation of the Murman Coast which was to be watched.

The German designs against the Murman Coast encountered a sympathetic atmosphere in Finland for rather special reasons. Finland, within her historic frontiers, had no access to the Arctic Ocean; and yet the advantages for Finland of an outlet on that Ocean, providing her with a harbour open all the year round, are obvious. Now, in 1864, Alexander II, on incorporating with Russia a small strip of territory in southern Finland, had agreed that, as a compensation, Finland was to receive from Russia territory on the Arctic Ocean, 'to the east of the Jakobsälv River and near the Bay of Stolboa'—in other words, the district nowadays generally referred to as the Petsamo district. Nothing was, however, done during the Czarist regime to carry this arrangement into effect: but the Finnish claim naturally lost nothing of its validity. During the War of Independence, a Finnish free corps undertook at the beginning of May an expedition to Petsamo, with the cognizance of the Vasa Government. The object of this expedition was to investigate conditions at Petsamo and, if possible, to establish some kind of Finnish control over the district in order to facilitate its formal transfer to Finland in due course. On approaching Petsamo,

the free corps, on May 12th, was met by greatly superior forces before whose violent fire the Finns had to withdraw. The forces who had opposed them were alleged to be British marines from the Allied forces occupying the neighbouring Murman Coast, supplemented by Russian soldiers and Finnish Reds who had escaped into Russia.

It can be imagined with what eagerness the Germans seized upon this incident—which naturally came as a shock to Finnish sentiment—and tried to make capital of it. Inspiration from German quarters led to the framing of a Note on the subject from the Finnish to the British Government, which was presented to the British Minister in Stockholm, Sir Esmé Howard (later Lord Howard of Penrith), on June 26th. In this document, the claims of Finland to the Petsamo district are set out, the incident of May 12th is described, and, finally, the British Government is requested to withdraw its armed forces from the 'Finnish territory' in question. The terms, in which all this is set out, illustrate most vividly the fact that the Finnish Government no longer could avail itself of the services of someone who knew how to word a request of this delicacy. Fortunately, the British Cabinet was fully alive to the inexperience in diplomatic matters of those who then directed Finnish policy; and no drastic reply, such as otherwise might well have been forthcoming, was sent to the Finnish Note. Nevertheless, for weeks to come it was freely rumoured that war between Great Britain and Finland was imminent; and the German wire-pullers in Finland certainly wished for nothing better. However, on August 8th, the incident was closed by a note from the British Government which in the most conciliatory and tactful fashion reviewed the question at issue in all its implications and left no room for an answer. Graver complications were thus, happily, avoided; but the whole episode was not of a nature to inspire much confidence in the diplomatic ability of the statesmen who at that time were in control of affairs at Helsingfors.

The fact that Persia on July 23rd recognized the independence of Finland was gratifying enough, but could perhaps

hardly be regarded as a diplomatic success of greater importance. And meanwhile there had been ominous signs of an increasing coolness in the relations between France and Finland. Apart from the fact that the unchecked German influence in Finland, generally speaking, operated towards that result, there was one particular question over which France, at an early date, issued a stern warning to the Finnish Government. That was the question of a return to the monarchical system in Finland.

The monarchical idea had steadily been gaining ground among the non-socialist parties in Finland, though there was also powerful opposition to it—notably among the Agrarians, the second largest party of the Government coalition in the Diet, numbering twenty-six seats. The Regent was a Monarchist, and the majority of the Paasikivi Government was of the same political complexion. Matters were, however, from an international point of view, greatly complicated by the fact that all Monarchists in Finland without exception wanted a German prince on the throne of the country. Whether a Parliament, so depleted as the Finnish Diet was in the spring of 1918, was competent to decide so important a question as to whether Finland was to become a monarchy or a republic might well be argued; and it was the consciousness of these facts which caused the French Government at the end of May bluntly to intimate to the Finnish Government that: ‘The Government of the French Republic is not going to recognize in Finland any political regime established in this country by illegal means.’ -

The Finnish Government decided, however, to pursue the matter in the existing Diet: undeterred by the fact that even in this rump parliament the adversaries of monarchy could muster considerable forces. Thus the Grand Committee, on June 10th, with only one vote majority (15 against 14), adopted monarchy as the basis of the new form of government; and a month later, on July 13th, there was in the Diet itself no more than a five votes’ majority (57 against 52) in favour of the principle of monarchy. Finally, on August

7th, the voting on the new form of government did not secure for the latter the five-sixths majority which the Constitution of Finland required for a decision of this character to become law immediately. Faced with this situation, the Monarchists in the Diet, by arrangement with the Government—from which meanwhile some Republican ministers had resigned—decided upon an action, which may or may not have been legal, but which certainly meant a complete *volte face* as regards the parliamentary methods hitherto followed. Since the Swedish *Form of Government* of 1772 still unquestionably was what is known as a 'Fundamental Law' in Finland, and one of its paragraphs laid down the procedure to be followed in case the monarchical succession had lapsed, the Monarchists in the Diet proposed that the Government should be empowered to take such measures as would enable the Diet to proceed to the election of a King, in conformity with the paragraph aforesaid. This proposal was carried by 58 votes to 44: the Government responded with alacrity, adjourning the sittings of the Diet, and summoning it to meet again as a 'Super-numerary Diet'—a term of normal usage under the Finnish Constitution—on August 27th for the purpose of electing a king. The assembling of the Diet was eventually deferred for a month: and in the meantime the Government was taking all steps within its power to provide a candidate for the Finnish throne.

Preliminary discussions on the subject of such candidates had been going on for some time. A favourite was long Prince Adolf-Friedrich of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, a former Governor of Togoland and brother of the Prince Consort of the Netherlands. He had had specially close ties with the circles connected with the Jaeger movement; he had influential support in Germany; and only the fact that during June he took singularly indiscreet action in Finland, disclosing over-eagerness to be elected, caused his candidature to be dropped. Another much-backed runner had been Prince Oscar, the fifth son of the Kaiser: but this was more a case of hopes on the part of a group of admirers in Finland than

of any particular anxiousness to put himself forward on the part of the person concerned. However, by the middle of July the candidature of Prince Oscar had been definitely vetoed by the Kaiser himself. About this time a third name was mentioned which eventually became the one round which the whole of this long and fruitless effort centred: that of Prince Friedrich Karl, of the Landgraves of Hesse. A junior member of the non-reigning branch of the House of Hesse, Prince Friedrich Karl was at the time a man of fifty. He had taken no part in German public life, having followed a military career of the type usual among the cadets of the sovereign houses of Germany; but he enjoyed the reputation of being a quiet, cultured, well-balanced personality. Through his marriage, however, a certain definite political colour inevitably attached to him: for he had, in 1893, married Princess Margarethe, the youngest sister of the Kaiser. Of this marriage five sons had been born, one of whom had fallen in the World War: but with four of his sons surviving, one could not but feel that there were plenty of guarantees for the stability of the succession, should he become King of Finland.

About the middle of August, M. Svinhufvud, accompanied by his Foreign Secretary, M. Stenroth, went to Germany, where they were received by the Kaiser at Wilhelmshöhe on the 26th. A final effort was made on this occasion to induce the Kaiser to reconsider his decision as regards Prince Oscar: but on this point he remained adamant.

Prince Friedrich Karl therefore now became the official candidate for the throne of Finland. Direct contact was sought with him by means of a delegation from the Finnish Government, which was received by the Prince on September 6th at the Château of Friedrichshof, near Frankfurt-am-Main. A few days later he authorized the Finnish Government to announce that he was willing to accept the Crown of Finland on condition that the election would give evidence of sufficient support for the new throne. Having had it brought home to him, from an opposition quarter in Finland, that the legality of his election might properly be questioned, the

Prince—who, it should be stressed, at no time indulged in any romantic optimism about his chances—put forward the idea that he might at first go to Finland as a temporary ruler, pending a final decision through new elections or a plebiscite. In order that this and other questions might be discussed, a meeting at Reval between the Prince and M. Svinhufvud was arranged towards the end of September. The Regent was accompanied by two Cabinet Ministers, and the upshot of the discussion was that all the Finnish politicians returned home firmly convinced that in the Prince they had made a most excellent choice. There is nothing to show that, in their judgment of the man, they were not right; but of the general political situation, from which he was inseparable, they knew pathetically little.

About this time the military situation of Germany, gravely shaken on the Western Front already during the summer, was quickly getting more and more jeopardized. The British army had won its spectacular victories in Syria during September; and on September 29th, Bulgaria asked for an armistice. Prince Max of Baden was now appointed Imperial Chancellor; and when on October 5th he announced to the Reichstag that he had approached President Wilson, accepting the latter's fifteen points as a basis for peace negotiations, it was obvious that Germany owned having lost the war. Upon all those who, like the then rulers of Finland, had harboured illusions about Germany's military invincibility, the effect was a shattering one.

The Finnish Foreign Secretary, M. Stenroth, who, for all his inexperience and clumsiness, had, relatively speaking, a certain sense of realities, now drew the one conclusion which the situation warranted: on October 1st, he proposed to his colleagues that Finland, without delay, should avail herself of the one great asset which she still possessed, by asking Gustaf Mannerheim to proceed to England and France in order to put the relations between the Allied Powers and Finland upon a satisfactory footing. This went against the grain with many of the members of an administration which,

four months ago, had treated the Liberator of Finland so cavalierly : and not until October 9th did the Government decide to ask M. Carl Enckell to travel to Stockholm, where Gustaf Mannerheim was staying at the time, in order to invite him to come to Helsingfors to discuss the situation with the Government. During the past summer it had been urged upon him from England and France that he should visit those countries ; but he had declined to act upon this from a feeling that he could not speak for the then Government of Finland. He accepted, however, the invitation now conveyed to him by M. Enckell ; and about the middle of October he was back at Helsingfors. ' Mannerheim back ' had, as a matter of fact, been the slogan of certain sections of the Finnish Press ever since the beginning of August.

The situation, as it had developed by the time of his return, was truly bristling with difficulties. To start with, it had been necessary to inform Prince Friedrich Karl of the fact that the British Government had no intention of recognizing Kaiser Wilhelm's brother-in-law as King of Finland, and that his election to that dignity would make it very difficult for England to recognize the independence of Finland. The Prince, on receiving this news, declared, on October 7th, that, as King, he would be strictly neutral, and ' feel himself a Finn.' And here it may be noted, that owing to his having a good many connexions in England, Prince Friedrich Karl was long fairly sanguine of overcoming British susceptibilities regarding himself ; indeed he wanted at a later stage to send a personal representative to England in the hope of achieving this result.

On October 9th, the Monarchists in the Finnish Diet, with a steadfastness which certainly has something striking but also definitely partakes of quixotry, proceeded to the election of Friedrich Karl. The procedure which was followed had, as its first item, a vote on the question, whether a dynasty was to be elected. This was agreed to by the unimpressive division of 64 against 41 votes—majority 23 in a

rump parliament! Thereupon, the election of Friedrich Karl took place unanimously, but the whole of the Agrarian party entered a caveat against the election.

Not even in Germany did this action meet with general approval. Criticism of it was widespread among the parties of the left, the official mouthpiece of the Socialist Party, *Vorwärts*, declaring that the election amounted to a veritable obstacle to the conclusion of peace. And as to France, her reaction was as speedy as it was decisive. Less than a week after the election, the French Consul at Helsingfors delivered a Note to the Finnish Foreign Office which followed up the line indicated by the communication made at the end of May by the French Government to the Finnish Government. In the Note of October 15th, the French Government takes the strongest possible exception to the pro-German proclivities of the Finnish Government; and the communication ends by stressing that 'the recognition which France has given to Finland's provisional Government, cannot possibly, *ipso facto*, be extended to any new regime, which has been brought about only by violating the enactments of the fundamental laws and by the methods of a veritable *coup d'état*. Apart from this, France cannot, under any circumstances whatever, recognize a monarchy, whose head would be a prince from a country which has gone to war with France.' In other words, the one *de jure* recognition, secured by Finland among the Great Powers of the Entente, was now in the gravest jeopardy.

The day after M. Stenroth received the French Note, he addressed a meeting of the members of the Government and the delegates of the various parties in the Diet. Emphasizing the importance of obtaining recognition of Finland's independence from Great Britain and the United States, he suggested that Prince Friedrich Karl, while declaring his willingness to accept the Finnish Crown, should defer his accession until peace all round had been restored to the world, and 'all those obstacles, connected with foreign affairs, will have disappeared which now are making the arrival of the Prince difficult.' It

is symptomatic of the sentiment still obtaining in Finland at the time, that the views expressed by M. Stenroth met with considerable opposition from his audience. He took it, however, upon himself, after consultation with the Regent and the Prime Minister, to convey his views to the Prince. The Finnish Foreign Secretary had the satisfaction of learning that the Prince fully shared his opinions; and the official reply to the Diet, which the Prince handed to a Finnish representative on November 4th, was a virtual acceptance of the suggestions put to him by M. Stenroth. 'It almost seems,' says the Prince, 'as if from my election sprang an obstacle to the recognition of Finland's independence. This would be all the more difficult to understand, since, in my opinion—which I have repeatedly expressed to the representatives of the Diet and the Government—friendly relations between Finland and also those Great Powers which have not yet recognized her independence, possess the greatest importance for the success of the young State, and because both the present and the future policy of Finland demand that such friendly and ever more confident relations are brought about, strengthened and preserved.' At the end of his letter the Prince announced, that 'certain circumstances, which are beyond my control, force me yet for some time to defer my final decision, which, it will be remembered, I have from the beginning reserved for myself.'

By the time this letter was received in Finland, Gustaf Mannerheim had already left for England and France. Without heeding the fact that the Finnish Government now were faced with a situation which would never have arisen if his advice had been followed, he had declared himself willing to attempt to remedy the position. He did not conceal to himself the great difficulties of the task he was undertaking, and he preferred to proceed on his mission without a definite official status, precisely because he would carry more weight with the Western Powers as someone who, having been superseded on account of his political opinions, now had come into his own again. The objects of his mission were to

establish friendly relations between Great Britain, France, and the United States on the one hand, and Finland on the other ; to arrange about the release of food imports into Finland, a matter of the utmost importance owing to the tremendous scarcity of foodstuffs in the country ; and to explain the point of view of the Finnish Government regarding the election of Prince Friedrich Karl to the throne of Finland. The discussions with the Finnish Government regarding these various complicated matters naturally took some time, and it was not until the beginning of November that Gustaf Mannerheim could start on the momentous journey on behalf of his country which, via Sweden and Norway, was to take him first of all to England.

CHAPTER IX

GUSTAF MANNERHEIM RECONCILES ENGLAND AND FRANCE
WITH FINLAND AND IS ELECTED REGENT OF FINLAND

ON the morning of November 12th, 1918, a tall, soldierly figure could be seen slowly walking down Piccadilly, wrapt in thought. This was Gustaf Mannerheim who had only just arrived in London from Aberdeen, after a rough crossing of the North Sea from Bergen, delayed for several days. The streets were gay with the flags of the Allies, hung from the windows in celebration of the Armistice concluded the day before: and the sight was one which cheered the heart of the Northern visitor, who himself had for years fought his hardest on the Eastern front to achieve an Allied victory. At the same time, the very magnitude of the victory gained by the Allies could not but add to the complication of the difficult task which had brought him to London—the rehabilitation, in Western eyes, of his country, which, through the incompetence of its Government, had got tarded with the German brush about as completely as this could be done. Little wonder, then, that the hour was one of hard and concentrated thinking for the new arrival in London.

In Sweden, too, there were important recent happenings, the full details of which were probably not known to him on that grey autumn morning, though he must have been cognizant of the general drift of things there in a direction which he could not welcome. It will be remembered that the action of the Swedish Government over Åland earlier in the year, in February, had been inspired by a desire to effect a reunion of that archipelago with Sweden. During the

ensuing months, much had been done by the Swedish Government to encourage the tendency of the Åland population to break away from Finland; and on November 11th—the very day when Gustaf Mannerheim landed in Scotland—the delegates of an unofficial provincial assembly, summoned in Åland, waited upon the English, French, and American Ministers in Stockholm, with a request that the Governments which they represented should help the population of Åland to be reunited to Sweden.

It is germane to our subject here to remark that rumour in Sweden had lately been particularly busy with Gustaf Mannerheim and his intentions; and the fantastic stories that were being told about him in the Swedish newspapers were naturally calculated to create an 'atmosphere' unhelpful to his negotiations. It was thus asserted that he was assembling an army of 200,000 prisoners of war which was to attack Soviet Russia; or again that a 'White' Russian Government had been formed under his ægis, and financed by him in exchange for the cession of Eastern Carelia to Finland, which also, it was said to be stipulated, was to retain Åland.

The first contacts which Gustaf Mannerheim made in London quickly brought it home to him what an uphill task he had undertaken. Among the prominent people he saw were Mr. Balfour, Lord Robert Cecil (at that time Assistant Secretary for Foreign Affairs), Lord Hardinge of Penshurst (Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and knowing Gustaf Mannerheim since the days when he was British Ambassador in Russia), Lord Milner, and Sir Henry Wilson; and he had also consultations with a number of other personalities connected with the Foreign Office, and other Government institutions, Parliament and the Press. At all times there was personal courtesy towards the distinguished visitor: but officially there was great reserve. Actually, on the eve of Gustaf Mannerheim's departure from Finland, Lord Robert Cecil had, on October 31st, summed up the standpoint of Great Britain towards Finland in the following fashion: 'In con-

formity with the principles of the Allies regarding the right of the small nations to freedom and self-determination, Finland ought to become an independent State as soon as a strong Government has been established, provided that the majority of the Finnish people supports the idea of Finland's independence. The accession of a German prince to the Finnish Throne would powerfully affect the diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Finland. On the other hand, the British Government is perfectly ready to enter into friendly relations with a Finnish government, formed by persons who do not take their orders from Germany and who are not compromised through their relations with the German military clique.' A communication to this effect was addressed to a Helsingfors newspaper on November 13th by the British Consul in the Finnish capital.

The English official attitude towards Finland, as disclosed to Gustaf Mannerheim in his various interviews, was, if anything, rather less forthcoming than was indicated by the communication just quoted. It was marked, for one thing, by considerable scepticism as to the dependableness of promises made by the Finnish Government; moreover, the feeling prevailed that a decision as to the recognition of Finnish independence ought to be deferred until the meeting of the Peace Conference. Action would only be taken in conjunction with the other Allies, particularly France: no initiative in the matter was, however, to be expected from England. As to the question of the purchase of food supplies for Finland, there was no real headway to be made with this as long as the major political difficulties had not been liquidated. Finally, the utter hopelessness of any attempt to obtain British support for the election of Prince Friedrich Karl soon became evident. This was a matter as to which Gustaf Mannerheim personally did not feel strongly at all, having had nothing to do with the candidature of the Prince or the tortuous course of his election: but in loyalty to his principals, he had done his best to urge their point of view to the British Government. But when a hostile attitude towards the cause

of Prince Friedrich Karl was taken up even by a prominent British politician whom the Prince had looked upon as a supporter, there could be no question but that this was indeed a lost cause.

A circumstantial telegram from Gustaf Mannerheim to the Finnish Foreign Secretary sets out the position as it had been outlined to him in the course of a long interview with Lord Robert Cecil on November 16th. Soon afterwards, he felt that he had sufficiently explored the situation in London : and the conviction had by then developed in him, that if there existed a key to the complex problem with which he was faced, it could only be found in Paris. He consequently lost no time in proceeding to the French capital.

At this point it will be well to say a few words about political developments which meanwhile had taken place in Finland. Germany's acceptance of the Armistice terms had put her utter defeat in the World War beyond the realm of speculation. It now became obvious even to the die-hards in Helsingfors that new men were needed in control of affairs. Heroic decisions were now arrived at : Gustaf Mannerheim was invited to succeed M. Svinhufvud as Regent of Finland, and the entire Paasikivi administration resigned, its place being taken by a Coalition Cabinet representative of all non-Socialist parties except the Agrarians. The new Premier was M. Ingman, a Professor of Divinity at Helsingfors University with considerable experience of parliamentary affairs ; while the post of Foreign Secretary was entrusted to one of Finland's greatest experts in the field of foreign politics, M. Enckell, who lately had been instrumental in securing Gustaf Mannerheim's return to public life. On the question of Monarchy v. Republic, the twelve members of the Cabinet were equally divided. This Cabinet assumed office on November 27th : already before, Gustaf Mannerheim had accepted in principle the invitation extended to him. Whilst the negotiations regarding the formation of the new Government went on, he had from London stressed the importance of securing an administration which would remove the dis-

trust of Finland felt in England: with the details of the selection of Ministers he had had but little to do.

In Paris the initial experiences of Gustaf Mannerheim were also far from encouraging. The fact that, in spite of France's early recognition of Finland's independence, the latter country had allowed itself to be so completely swayed by German influence, naturally rankled deep: and the psychological moment, on the morrow of Germany's surrender, presented here difficulties at least as great as in England. There were, moreover, some special complications in France.

For one thing, there had settled in that country a number of prominent White Russian *émigrés*, possessing considerable influence ever since the days, not so long past, when Czarist Russia was France's valued ally; and this group of *émigrés* was convinced that Bolshevism in Russia would soon be overthrown and that Imperial Russia would then be restored. An independent Finland did not square with their political programme for the future: and they were tirelessly active in the French political world, and also among the American diplomatists and statesmen now assembling in Paris, opposing the notion of Finnish independence.

Moreover, Swedish influence was making itself powerfully felt in France over the question of the Åland Islands. This was strikingly illustrated when one of Gustaf Mannerheim's most influential interlocutors raised the matter during an interview which had been arranged between the two, evidently impressed by the Swedish case, which the Stockholm Government hoped would receive favourable consideration by the Peace Conference, when its meetings were commenced in another couple of months. Gustaf Mannerheim now stressed that even during the centuries, when Sweden and Finland were one, the archipelago had always been regarded as one of the provinces of Finland. Warming to his subject he declared that Finland would resist a cession of Åland to Sweden at the cost of streams of blood; and that if a hunger blockade were tried, people would collapse from hunger in the streets of Helsingfors before Finland gave in: all the

world could then judge of the means resorted to against Finland—only just set free through a terrible war—by her old mother country. But, said Gustaf Mannerheim, there was a much better way of settling the Åland question: an amicable arrangement between Sweden and Finland providing for a joint defence of the archipelago in the case of war, the interests of both countries thereby being served as well as could be. The arguments of Gustaf Mannerheim went home and drew the remark that the Allies truly owed nothing to Sweden, which had been definitely Germanophile during the War, and thus could expect no advantages accruing to her from the peace negotiations. There was no need to add to the contentious questions already existing in such numbers: and a warning would be conveyed to the Swedes not to press for a solution which was harmful to Finland.

Despite his having already in London formed the opinion that Prince Friedrich Karl had no chance of becoming King of Finland, Gustaf Mannerheim yet, out of a sense of loyalty, tried his best also in Paris to plead the cause of the Prince. Needless to say, this was a completely wasted effort. A characteristic story is told of a conversation on this subject which he had with one of the most prominent French statesmen. Gustaf Mannerheim explained that, although he did not personally know the Prince, he had yet gathered the impression that, once he became King of Finland, his line of action would be entirely dictated by that country's interests, even if they came into conflict with Germany's. To this the French statesman replied: "*Trop tard*. That you should have told us six months ago. Then the position still was such that we would have contented ourselves with a little finger offered us: now we already ask for love."

Gustaf Mannerheim was no stranger to Paris, where he counted a large number of friends: and his negotiations there were singularly facilitated by his perfect command of French. The two principal contacts which on this occasion he made in Paris were Stéphan Pichon, the French Foreign Secretary and an old and trusted friend and comrade-in-arms

of Clemenceau's; and Philippe Berthelot, the all-powerful chief of the Political Department at the Quai d'Orsay. He also saw Aristide Briand, at the moment out of office, but still very influential and likely to be back in control of affairs almost at any moment; M. Franklin-Bouillon, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs, a very important cog in the political wheel in France; and M. Albert Thomas, the famous left-wing intellectual, who had been sent as a special representative of France to Russia after the overthrow of Czarism and had tried, without success, to fan pro-Ally feeling in a country worn out with war. In addition, a number of other personalities were fitted into the scheme of Gustaf Mannerheim's consultations and discussions—people less in the news, but all of them possessing their quota of political influence.

Gradually, the emissary of Finland began to see daylight: it was obvious that his personality was inspiring confidence and he could now decide upon a course of action and suggest a basis of understanding with some prospect of success. The first essential was the dropping of Prince Friedrich Karl: and henceforth nothing more was said about him in the discussions regarding Finland's future. Similarly, all German troops were to be immediately withdrawn from Finland, and no German military instructors were to be employed in the Finnish army any longer. In place of the latter, two French officers were to be invited to Finland to study the military problems of the country: but, true to his opinion that Finland ought in all matters concerned with the army to try to stand on her own feet, and despite his own strongly pro-French feelings, Gustaf Mannerheim was determined to keep all foreign influence upon Finland's military affairs within definite limits.

Parliamentary elections, to be held as soon as possible, were to put an end to the survival of the rump parliament, with its chequered and inglorious history. As to the Finnish Cabinet, the administration appointed on November 27th did not in every way answer the expectations of the French: but

Gustaf Mannerheim characteristically shielded it, insisting, that if he himself who was going to be Regent was trusted, the details of the composition of the Government were of minor importance. The main thing was, of course, that the discredited administration had vanished to a man.

In face of the essentially new situation created in Finland, Gustaf Mannerheim now felt that France could properly be asked to resume full diplomatic relations with Finland and also to approach the British Government, before the meeting of the Peace Conference, regarding the recognition of Finland's independence. Finland, he urged strongly in various influential quarters in France, had, thanks to her existence as an autonomous State for over a century, a solid political structure of her own, which put her into a different class from that of other States which had lately sprung up on the shores of the Baltic, and whose respective cases were going to be examined at the Peace Conference.

Finally, for the very reasons which justified France's political intervention on behalf of Finland, her good offices towards remedying the food situation in Finland could, with equal propriety, be invoked.

In an interview with Pichon, an agreement on the reciprocal basis here outlined was reached : Gustaf Mannerheim could briefly report this result in a telegram on December 8th sent to Helsingfors from London, where he had meanwhile returned. The telegram stressed, however, that it was a great handicap for Gustaf Mannerheim in his negotiations to lack the authority which would be his if his election to the post of Regent was a *fait accompli*. Four days later M. Svinhufvud formally resigned, whereupon Gustaf Mannerheim was elected Regent of Finland by the Diet.

The diplomatic success so quickly achieved by Gustaf Mannerheim in Paris caused some considerable surprise in England : but the attitude of the British Government towards Finland being, fundamentally, one of the utmost goodwill, he received warm congratulations in London on the result of his negotiations in Paris. Matters now went very smoothly

in London ; and one question of the utmost importance for Finland was at last decided in favour of that country. This was the question of the release of the supplies of foodstuffs—that is, a large quantity of grain for bread—which had been purchased for Finland in America, but which, as we saw, owing to the political difficulties, had never been permitted to be sent to their destination. All obstacles were now swept away, since confidence in Finland had returned to the Allies with the election of Gustaf Mannerheim as Regent : and apart from the purely humanitarian aspects of the decision, it was of enormous political importance in strengthening the position of the new head of the Finnish State and in helping to counteract the spread of disaffection, always bound to thrive among a population in the grip of famine. Since, however, the long-awaited purchases from America would inevitably be some time in arriving, it became necessary to obtain the permission of the Allies for the loan, meanwhile, of a quantity of wheat to be dispatched from Denmark to Finland, thus bridging over some of her immediate difficulties ; and this permission, too, was readily granted.

The Finnish point of view regarding the Åland question having been authoritatively put to the Allies by Gustaf Mannerheim, there was little further to be usefully done in that direction for the moment, beyond keeping a close watch on the situation. The White Russian propaganda against Finland in France was also not forgotten by Gustaf Mannerheim and measures were taken by him to counteract it in the future.

Before starting on his journey home, the new Regent of Finland was entertained at dinner by the small Finnish colony in London. He wore a very different expression that evening from the one of care and concern which was his on his arrival in London : and well might he. Under conditions of unparalleled difficulty, created by fellow-countrymen against his own insistent warnings, he had quickly rehabilitated Finland in the eyes of the West ; and he was now going back to work for her future under auspices more favourable than

anyone would have dared imagine possible a few weeks ago. He addressed to the assembled company stirring words of confidence and hope, stressing the importance of closing all divisions and the need for quick effort: and he recalled in moving accents the example of heroism and self-sacrifice set by that White army which, fighting against fantastic odds, had established the freedom and independence of Finland.

The Finland to which Gustaf Mannerheim went back presented in one way a very definite contrast to the one he had left. Gone were the German soldiers, stationed up and down the country and on the islands of the Gulf of Finland. After the Armistice the withdrawal of the German forces gradually began, and was completed by December 16th, when General von der Goltz left, accompanied by the last units of his expeditionary corps. Consciousness of the help which the German troops undoubtedly had brought Finland at a moment of difficulty, and political sympathy which did not vanish overnight, were reflected in many expressions of gratitude which reached the Germans before departing. Bonds of discipline had, incidentally, got very lax of late among these troops, nor had harmony between them and the country people been furthered by the reckless foraging in which they had increasingly indulged. In his *Memoirs*, Count von der Goltz has written an epitaph on his Finnish expedition, which sounds strange indeed to-day:

‘With the talent of Finnish friendship every German Government ought to trade. It must, however, always be stressed that the friendship of Finland is directed towards those Germans who, together with them, have fought against the Bolsheviks and who look upon this fight for Central European civilization as being also henceforth the question of the future. That is why thoughtful people in Finland warmly greeted the resurrection of Germany which began in 1933. For the new Germany regards, like Finland, Bolshevism as her most dangerous enemy.

‘ The result of the Finnish expedition in 1918 I would sum up as follows :

‘ In alliance with Finland, the saving of Finland and Scandinavia from Bolshevism. Even the most malevolent criticism will not be able to disallow my German Fatherland, so much hated abroad, this success and this glory.’

Since we are on the subject of Germany, a word or two should perhaps here be devoted to the epilogue of the story of Prince Friedrich Karl, the shadow King of Finland. Having been informed that England and France remained adamant on the subject of his candidature, he released Finland from all obligations which she had contracted towards him: a declaration to this effect is contained in a letter from him, not without dignity, which was published in the Finnish Press on December 29th, 1918. He is still alive, and so are his four sons—at least three of them, indeed, very much alive in the service of the German regime which bears the direct responsibility for the most terrible disaster which has ever overtaken Finland.

Shortly before Christmas, on December 22nd, Gustaf Mannerheim disembarked at Åbo, receiving a tremendous welcome from the large crowds which had assembled to greet him. He proceeded at once to Helsingfors where the ovations were repeated on an even larger scale. This was his second triumphal entry into Helsingfors in a year: and an eye-witness has given a singularly vivid picture of the scene. ‘ It was a kind of passionate frenzy which seized the crowds as they saw again the white fur cap and the grey uniform worn by their hero, who slowly, bowing towards all sides, drove through the city to the Government House and from there to his official residence, the modest dwelling he had chosen in the former house of the Governor-General of Finland, during the past spring the headquarters of the Reds. Now its rooms were filled with all the white flowers that the town could produce.’

The day after his return, the following message from him to the people of Finland was published in the newspapers :

‘ At the moment when I again step on to the soil of my native land, having been summoned to the post of Regent through the confidence of the Diet, I greet people and land from the depth of my heart. I feel profoundly the burden of responsibility, and—while deeply grateful for the confidence placed in me—would yet definitely have declined to assume it, if the momentous times, marked by events unparalleled in the world’s history, had not made it impossible for me at this juncture not to obey the summons of the representatives of the people. I have accepted this high office, convinced that my honest endeavour will meet with response on the part of the whole of the people of Finland and that this nation will now stand united, in order to vindicate finally the independence and freedom of Finland.

‘ Now, if ever, unity and comprehension of the true good of our country are necessary. It is for us now to enter into close and friendly relations for the future with those powers which are going to decide upon the destinies of empires ; and which have been magnanimous enough to extend to our people, now on the brink of famine, the great concession of letting me bring home the promise of the right for us to import one hundred and twenty million kilogrammes of grain for bread.

‘ United effort is, moreover, necessary, in order so to settle the interior conditions, that the people of Finland and her parliamentary representatives, after the new elections about to take place, may calmly and securely be able to work on the healing of all the wounds caused by the war, on conciliation within the State, and be able to enjoy their newly-won freedom. Finally, unity is needful, in order that this people may be able to retain the respect of the nations and gain the recognition, on the part of all States, of her independence, won in hard struggle ; and in order that this people may develop such strength that, aiming at friendly relations with

those neighbouring peoples which have retained a social structure bound together by law, it may, strong and dignified, be able to live its own national life, progressing on the path of historical evolution.

‘Confiding in the honest intention of every citizen, I summon the people of Finland to united work for our welfare, our freedom and our future.’

By a happy coincidence the first of the food ships, released through Gustaf Mannerheim’s efforts, arrived in Helsingfors on the day of his return: it brought wheaten flour, which Finland had not seen for years.

A letter from Sophie Mannerheim, written to a correspondent abroad, gives us a glimpse of all that passed through her mind on the eve of her brother’s arrival:

‘How wonderfully things have turned out, and how different everything looks this Christmas when, at last, one can hope for the dawn of a new and better day, however terrible the last spasms of the war may be. Also here in Finland people are beginning to feel more at ease. All have such tremendous hopes of Gustaf, but his task will not be a light one, especially as the general opinion is that he is going to be a magician, who at one stroke alters everything here and creates ordered conditions out of the most terrible chaos. I hope, too, and believe that he will succeed; but an enormous deal is expected of him, the dear, beloved boy.’

After her brother’s arrival, she writes:

‘You can imagine how happy I am to have Gustaf here and under these circumstances: I only hope that his strength will be up to the unparalleled burden of work which has been placed on his shoulders. May God help him, my beloved brother, so that he may well discharge this difficult task.’



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM AT THE END OF THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM AS REGENT OF FINLAND WITH HIS FOUR
AIDES-DE-CAMP

CHAPTER X

THE REGENT OF FINLAND

IT is difficult to convey what a sense of relief and security descended upon Finland now that Gustaf Mannerheim was definitely established as Regent in Helsingfors. After the convulsions and disasters of 1917 and 1918, it was truly marvellous to feel that control of the affairs of State was concentrated in the hands of someone who was capable of shielding the Finnish State against all dangers both from within and without and whose whole personality was such as to inspire confidence and respect everywhere. The powers vested in the Regent of Finland were derived from the Swedish Constitution framed in the eighteenth century by King Gustaf III, a typical representative of 'enlightened despotism': it gave the Sovereign greater powers than were wielded by any other ruler in Europe in 1919—he could, for instance, make war or peace without the sanction of Parliament. But no critic, however searching, has ever been able to point to a single instance of misuse of his powers on the part of that other Gustaf—the parallel was often drawn at the time—who now ruled Finland in virtue of the Constitution bequeathed to that country by his Royal namesake and predecessor.

The style of life at the official residence of the Regent was simple and dignified, without so much as a trace of display or ostentation. Four aides-de-camp were in attendance upon him, including one of Finland's most famous artists, the painter Axel Gallén-Kallela, who had been given military rank already during the War of Independence when he was attached to G.H.Q.: his advice was frequently sought on

such matters as the designing of uniforms or decorations. Gradually there was a slight revival of social life in war-scarred Helsingfors, the striking figure of the Regent making an ideal centre of it all. At the Residence the duties of hostess usually devolved upon Gustaf Mannerheim's younger daughter, Sophie—the elder, Anastasie, was by now a nun in a Carmelite convent in London; and, of course, at all times his sister Sophie was a most dependable stand-by. The easy dignity and unaffected courtesy of the Regent were invaluable assets in the contacts he was continuously making with high and low; and it was not long before he began making extensive tours in Finland, often revisiting the sites of the battles of the War of Independence on their anniversaries. The popular enthusiasm which met him on these journeys was boundless—the crowds, it used to be said, ‘no longer cheered, they roared.’ In every direction one experienced the effect of a magnetic personality looked up to as the embodiment of Finnish patriotism.

The main problem in foreign politics continued to be the question of Finland's recognition by all the Allies; and although the results achieved in the course of the Regent's visit to England and France were never permanently lost, there were yet to be many complications and delays before the goal so ardently desired was reached. One question which had caused difficulties already during the negotiations in Paris now cropped up again: that of the composition of the new Finnish Cabinet. Exception was again taken in Paris to certain members of the Cabinet, as being compromised by German connexions in the past; and on January 15th the Regent found himself compelled to address some cogently argued considerations on the subject to Pichon. He informed the French Foreign Secretary that the Ingman Cabinet had his confidence, in spite of the fact that it had not been formed by him; and he stressed that, in complete loyalty, it was energetically and successfully co-operating with him, in order to remove the obstacles, which yet interfered with the creation of full confidence between Finland and France. The attention

of Pichon was drawn to the fact that changes in the composition of the Government would put weapons in the hands of the adversaries, still powerful, of the policy of the Regent : such changes would be interpreted as throwing doubt on the efforts loyally made by him and the Government, and, by creating an unfavourable atmosphere, would seriously threaten the success of the work begun by him. Pointing to what he had achieved, he underlined that all German army instructors and all German officers with commissions in the Finnish army had now left Finland. Thus all the conditions which had been made by France for the resumption of diplomatic relations had now been complied with : and the Regent therefore requested that France should recognize his Government and send a diplomatic mission to Helsingfors. This would strengthen the authority of the Regent and the Government ; and it would also be to the interest of France to be able to gather accurate information on the spot regarding the interior situation in Finland before the election campaign opened. The writer of the present volume, who at that moment was in charge of Finland's diplomatic representation in England, was instructed to make a declaration in the same sense at the Foreign Office, asking also that an English diplomatic mission be sent to Finland.

A communication, such as the one just set out, has the authentic Mannerheim ring. It is urbane, but firm and dignified : and nothing is abated on what he deems to be Finland's essential interests. Nor did he have to wait long for a satisfactory response : on January 25th the French Consular representative in Helsingfors, M. Poirot, informed M. Enckell that the French Government, in view of the policy followed by the Regent and the Finnish Government, had invited the other Allied Governments to recognize Finland's independence. A reply in the affirmative had been received from the British Government : and France and England were now waiting for an answer from the other Powers approached.

A hopeful symptom was provided a few days later by the decision not to include Finland and Poland among those

countries whose future was to be discussed at the Prinkipo Conference, which, for that matter, never materialized. Poland had by this time the status of an ally : and that Finland was put on a par with her could therefore only be regarded as an event of very happy augury. Gradually, however, the effect of certain adverse factors made itself felt. Urgent problems in Central Europe switched attention from the Finnish question ; voices were raised which urged that the results of the forthcoming elections in Finland—on March 1st and 3rd—ought to be awaited, before the question of the recognition of Finland was finally settled. At the beginning of February, indeed, the attitude of President Wilson and Mr. Lansing defined itself as opposed to early recognition. There was nothing for it but to exercise patience in Finland ; and the delay turned out to be of considerable duration. Meanwhile, the Regent had the satisfaction of learning, on March 8th, that his request that a French mission be sent to Finland had been agreed to : and it was stressed that the French Government had announced their decision without waiting for the result of the elections. ‘ This has been done,’ continued the communication, ‘ in order to show that the decision is independent of this question of Finnish home politics and that it therefore must be regarded as an expression of the satisfaction caused in Paris by the policy which your Excellency announced in his Manifesto on assuming office—a policy which breathes confidence in the Allied Powers, which wish Finland only happiness and success.’

While the attempts finally to settle Finland’s relations with the Allies had provided the most urgent task for the Finnish Foreign Office during the period which we have just reviewed, watchfulness and action had also been needed in other directions. On the Eastern front all was decidedly not quiet : as lately as November 20th the heavy guns at Kronstadt had all of a sudden started a bombardment of various settlements in the parish of Nykyrka, on the Carelian Isthmus, thereby causing considerable damage ; and the episode, though the most spectacular one of its kind,

was by no means an isolated one. It was, however, against the Baltic provinces that the Bolsheviks now concentrated their warlike action: after the withdrawal of the German troops, Estonia, Livonia, and Courland saw themselves attacked by strong Russian forces, and an appeal for foreign assistance went out from them early in December. The plight of Estonia—half of which was soon overrun by the Soviets—evoked great sympathy in Finland, on account of the racial ties existing between the two countries, quite apart from the obvious military dangers arising for Finland from a Bolshevik occupation of the entire southern coast of the Gulf of Finland. An influential Committee of Assistance to Estonia was therefore quickly formed in Helsingfors, and, with the approval and co-operation of the Government, rushed through the organization of an expeditionary corps which was to hasten to the rescue of the Estonians. The first Finnish troops reached Reval on December 30th, and were joined by others a fortnight later: the members of this force were nearly all seasoned fighters with experience from Finland's War of Independence, and the effect of this active help—apart from the war materials supplied—soon made itself felt. The Estonians were able to launch an attack on January 3rd and in heavy fighting the Russians were quickly driven back: by the end of February practically the whole of the Estonian territory had been cleared of them. The Finnish action of help to Estonia at once called forth much commendation on the part of the Allies, who obviously were opposed to the spread of Bolshevik power and yet at the time had no means of countering it effectively on the shores of the Baltic; though the timely arrival of a British squadron off Reval in December did much to put heart into the Estonians when things looked blackest for them. On February 24th Estonia formally declared her independence. In Estonia the idea of a union with Finland somewhat on the lines of Austria-Hungary had by that time found many enthusiastic supporters and was freely urged by them in discussions with Finnish politicians. The grave dangers both to Estonia and

Finland, inherent in such a scheme, were, however, obvious to Gustaf Mannerheim and all responsible statesmen in Finland; and no serious encouragement for it was, in consequence, forthcoming from the Finnish side. During the spring, the Finnish troops were withdrawn from Estonia: their arrival, at a crucial moment, had been of decisive importance for the destinies of Estonia and the Baltic States in general: and the whole enterprise had been of definite importance in securing further goodwill for Finland from the Allies.

In which direction, among her neighbours, Finland was to seek her political orientation—as to that Gustaf Mannerheim had never for a moment been in doubt. It was in the direction of Scandinavia: and the country, with which an understanding should primarily be sought, was obviously Sweden. When, therefore, at the beginning of 1919 the sovereigns of the three Scandinavian countries invited the Regent of Finland to visit them, this was an invitation which gave particular pleasure and was eagerly accepted. The historic meeting, when for the first time a King of Sweden welcomed in his country the head of an independent Finland, took place at Stockholm on February 12th, 1919. An ineffective attempt at a demonstration against the Finnish visitor was made by some left-wing elements when he disembarked and proceeded to the Royal Palace: it was the first-fruit of that international campaign of slander which had been started against Gustaf Mannerheim and which was gradually to gather strength in defiance of all standards of truth and justice. Otherwise, the reception on the part of the Swedish public lacked nothing in warmth; and in his speech of welcome at the State Banquet the King stressed that the visit of the Regent of Finland was greeted in Sweden “with sincere joy as a proof that the ties of friendship—knit between Sweden and Finland by many centuries of common history—still exist.” Replying, Gustaf Mannerheim stressed that “when the ties were broken, our nation had to face the task, not only of preserving and increasing, but also of remodelling, in conformity with our

national individuality, the priceless heritage of Western outlook, civilization and conception of right, which primarily through Sweden had come our way ; and, though subject to an Empire of wholly different cultural structure, of being a last outpost of Western civilization."

The political character of the Scandinavian tour was emphasized by the fact that the Regent was accompanied by his Foreign Secretary, M. Enckell. Indeed, the Åland question—which all the time formed the subject of incessant Swedish propaganda in England and France—was raised by the Swedes during the visit to Stockholm with evident eagerness, and discussed in all its aspects. Once again Gustaf Mannerheim pointed out what he all along conceived to be the best solution of this question—an arrangement providing for a joint defence of the archipelago by Sweden and Finland. No tangible results were, however, achieved as a result of these discussions, and the Åland question, though intermittently cropping up now and again during Gustaf Mannerheim's Regency, was not finally settled until midsummer 1921, when Finland's sovereignty over the archipelago was recognized by the Council of the League of Nations. In the later negotiations, which led up to this result, Gustaf Mannerheim also intervened, though in a private capacity, as will be mentioned in due course.

After the visit to Sweden, there should have followed one to Norway : but Gustaf Mannerheim now was taken ill, and the original programme for the trip had in consequence to be restricted. It was decided to leave Norway out and to proceed direct to Copenhagen, where an extremely cordial welcome was extended to the Finnish visitor by King Christian X and his people. The visit to Denmark inevitably had none of the political importance which attached to the Swedish visit ; but it stressed Finland's Scandinavian affinities, and also bore the character of a graceful acknowledgment of much practical sympathy shown to Finland by Denmark in the past. During the Czarist oppression of Finland, her case had received much effective support in Denmark, not least by the Royal Family, bound by ties of close relationship to the Russian Imperial

Family. The memory of that was vivid in Finland: and, more recently, Denmark had very generously come to the rescue of Finland over her desperate food situation in the manner that has been described, and in other ways as well.

From Denmark Gustaf Mannerheim returned via Sweden direct to Finland, where many matters of importance were claiming his attention.

Indeed, during his absence, there had been promulgated an ordinance to which he had, ever since his return to Finland, devoted much thought and attention—the ordinance regarding the new organization of the Volunteer Defence Corps. It will be recalled that during the Von der Goltz regime the Defence Corps all over Finland had been allowed to fall into decay; the new Regent, who rightly recognized their enormous importance for the maintenance of law and order in Finland and for the defence of the country, lost not a moment in giving back new life to them. We need not here go into the details of the organization then set up, which has retained most of its main features until the present day. One point may, however, be usefully mentioned. The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Corps, it was enacted, should be chosen by a vote of the whole organization; but the ratification of the choice was a matter for the head of the State. The Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Corps was also subordinated to the Ministry of Defence, though he was given a General Staff of his own. Local autonomy in the district organizations was carried very far: and the military value of this organization, since greatly developed in Finland, has been manifestly shown in the war of 1939–1940. But it should never be forgotten that the entire basis for it was laid during Gustaf Mannerheim's Regency.

The rump Diet was formally dissolved on February 28th. This was on the eve of the elections, and the farewell speech which the Regent addressed to the representatives had at the same time the character of an exhortation to the electors. The most striking passages were:

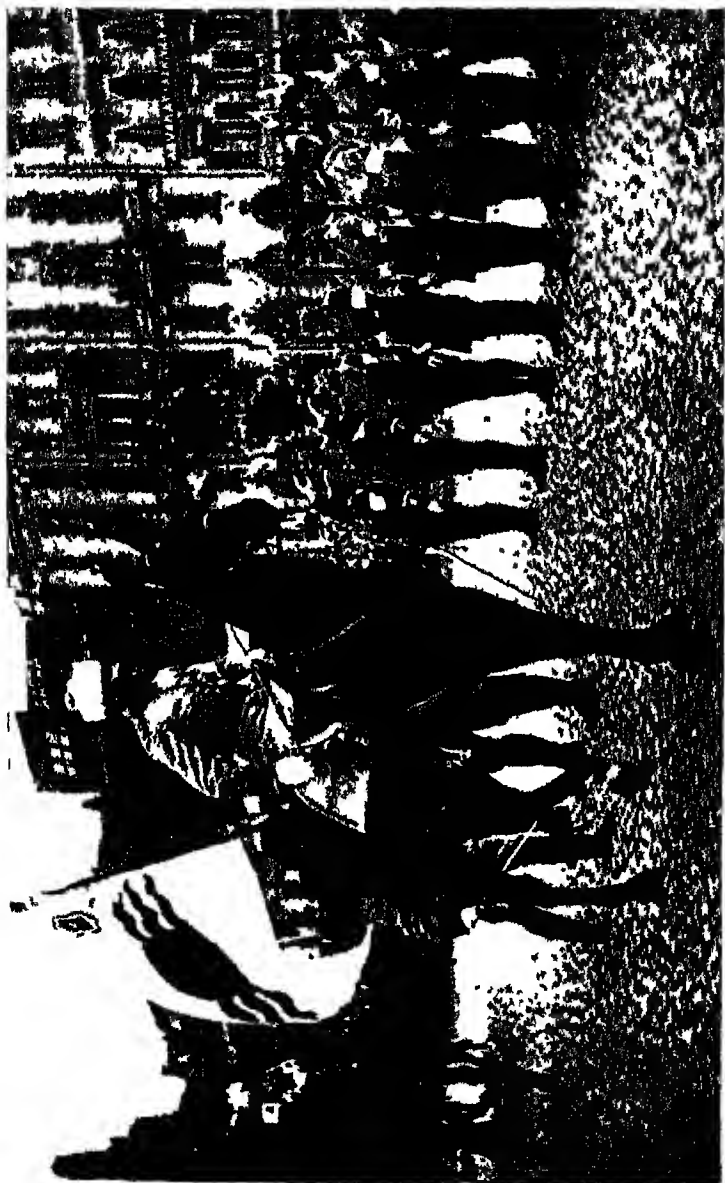
“A powerful breaker of division and unrest is rolling across



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM ON A STATE VISIT TO THE KING OF SWEDEN,
FEBRUARY, 1919



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM ON A STATE VISIT TO THE KING OF DENMARK,
FEBRUARY, 1919



GUSTAF MANNEHEIM REVIEWS THE DEFENCE CORPS OF HELSINGFORS 1919

the world. If we do not know how to protect ourselves, if we do not stand united in our efforts, this wave will sweep over our little country and engulf us with our young freedom. Let the people of Finland, which has purchased its longed-for freedom so dearly, unite in its defence.

"The essential condition for such a collaboration is that one honestly tries to adjust conflicting interests and that the good of the country is put before all group and class interests. In this respect, the work of legislation must still let itself be guided by a responsible feeling towards those members of society whose lot is the less favoured one. May it be given to our people, in spite of the divisions around us, on this basis to retain and strengthen among all citizens the feeling of national solidarity in defence of the happiness and freedom of our native country.

"By now the grave food crisis has also definitely been overcome. Our people, which stood on the brink of famine, can, thanks to the efforts of the Government and the kind response of friendly Powers, rely on fully secured, increased food rations, which are still further increased in the case of heavy workers."

The election campaign had been marked by great intensity, and had seen some re-grouping of the political forces : but the Socialist Party had been granted complete freedom of speech and of canvassing—a fact which may be stressed, since it serves very effectively to expose the legend of a 'White Terror' in Finland, so sedulously circulated by the left-wing propagandists. The electoral system was still the same, proportional one, under which the previous Diet had been elected.

The result showed a considerable set-back for the Socialists, which, on any other electoral system, would probably have been even more impressive : still, it was spectacular enough for this party to lose twelve seats, its mandates being thus reduced from ninety-two to eighty, and the non-Socialist majority of the Diet increased from sixteen to forty. Among

the Socialist candidates elected we may notice M. Väinö Tanner, who, though a member of many previous Diets, had not been elected in 1917: a Socialist parliamentarian of distinction was thus preserved for Finnish political life, in which he was to play an important part later on. The party which gained most in these elections was the Agrarians, a peasant party whose programme was marked by a curious mixture of ultra-democratic ideas and rigid adherence to class interests. Their figure of mandates rose from twenty-six to forty-two, amongst them two future Presidents of Finland, M. Kallio—who for that matter had been a member of M. Svinhufvud's 'Independence Government' until he resigned from it when it adopted a monarchical platform—and Dr. Relander who was elected Speaker. The changes in the representation of the other parties were of less importance.

The Diet met on April 4th, and was addressed by the Regent in a detailed and singularly persuasive speech, of which some passages deserve to be quoted. Referring to Finland's foreign relations he said :

“ We are able to notice with satisfaction that also in those States which have been victorious in the great world struggle there has come to the fore a greater confidence in our people, since the latter has proved itself able, in a difficult time and in the midst of a world of unrest and confusion, to vindicate its position as a sovereign State with an independent, national policy, and to retain order in the interior and a social system built on law, in spite of the continued threat of social disruption in the East.

“ This increased confidence is shown not only by the willingness with which the Western Powers have proceeded to the relief of famine, suffering and want in our country, but still more by the truly friendly relations with us, into which these Powers have entered through their representatives. The Government harbours the firm conviction that these relations will be formally confirmed and developed, as soon as the people of Finland have fully proved that stability and

ordered progress are the guiding stars which it has determined to follow in the future.

"The evolution of our country and our people demands inevitably the creation of normal economic conditions, and a speedy resumption of the trade connexions with foreign countries, to the same extent as before. Through commissions which have been sent out, the Government is endeavouring to bring this about.

"We aim at close and friendly relations with our neighbours in the West, and are therefore ready to give guarantees that no dangers coming from us will threaten them.

"At the same time as we, with all our energy, must work for the strengthening and developing of our relations with all those States with which we already are on a friendly footing we cannot unconcernedly watch the sufferings and persecutions to which our racial connexions living outside Finland are subjected, and their hard struggle for their national aims.

"The realization of our objects of foreign policy demands tact, intelligence, and a solid co-operation between Diet and Government, with the independence and happiness of our country as the highest and only goal."

Turning to home politics, the Regent continued :

"Also the peaceful development of our conditions at home makes great demands upon the activity of the Diet. It will be for you to devote your attention to the question of the future constitution of the country, and I hope that the various parties of the Diet may be able to give their unanimous support to a proposal, which guarantees for Finland a secure and independent development, within and without.

"Let us not try to reach impossible goals, or, under the influence of the social hurricane which rages in the world, allow ourselves to be led astray to make experiments which, instead of concentrating all available forces upon productive work, exhaust the strength of the country in political conflicts, and make it into a plaything of changing influences, defenceless against dangers from without.

"In times such as we are passing through only a constitution which gives the Government sufficient authority and strength can guarantee the survival and calm development of the State.

"Alongside of the question of the Constitution there presents itself the question of a final settlement of our army organization, for which the last Diet has provided a legislative foundation.

"This most vital question must be solved so that the defence organization of the country, without straining too much the economic resources of our people, yet gives us the possibility of maintaining the responsible but creditable position which we hold as one of the last outposts of Western civilization. The Government has, in consequence, already proceeded to measures for the development of the military legislation with these objects in view.

"The regulating of the State finances, so that the funds, needed for the governmental and social activities in the country, may be raised without too great a strain on the people, and more particularly its less wealthy sections, is going to claim the careful consideration of the Diet. By furthering economic production it is hoped to balance the State finances.

"The Diet last assembled has taken the legislative initiative to a great reform regarding land tenure, aiming at making the tenants into independent owners of the soil which they cultivate and live on. The speedy and happy realization of this important reform is going to call for the watchful care of the Diet and the Government, and, on the part of society, readiness for the sacrifices which such a measure inevitably demands.

"In the domain of social legislation we are also facing great tasks for whose realization the Government is preparing various Bills which will be very soon submitted to the Diet. The question, long under preparation, of compulsory education, will now, it is to be hoped, be brought to a happy solution."

The absence of any note of recrimination or partisanship in this speech is truly remarkable, especially if one compares it with the choicer specimens of present-day totalitarian oratory: it is inspired from beginning to end by a concern for Finland as a whole; and by no stretch of imagination can anything approaching an intention to oppress the proletariat be deduced from it.

The question of replacing the Ingman Cabinet with one which held its mandate direct from the new Diet had next to be taken in hand. It is again symptomatic of the entire absence of any 'White Terror' atmosphere in Finland that it was, on behalf of a coalition of the Agrarians and the Progressives—thus the two left-wing non-Socialist parties—that a member of the Diet, Professor Soininen, should have first undertaken to form an administration; and that when that attempt failed, the same member should have agreed to join the Cabinet which eventually, on April 17th, took over the control of affairs. The Premiership went to M. Kaarlo Castrén, who had been Minister of Finance in the Ingman Cabinet: politically he ranked as a Liberal, though not counting himself a member of any of the existing parties. M. Enckell at first continued in charge of the Foreign Office in the new administration; but he was soon appointed Finnish Minister in Paris, and was succeeded by Dr. Holsti, an advanced Progressive. The Cabinet was, with one or two exceptions, a very strong one for technical competence: it contained representatives of all Finnish non-Socialist parties of any importance, with one significant omission—the 'Party of National Union,' an essentially conservative party, many of whose prominent members were compromised by the Germanophile and monarchist tendencies which they had shown in 1918.

We must now retrace our steps to consider the further development of the question of the recognition of Finland's independence by all the Allied Powers, from the point at which this question stood at the beginning of March.

Towards the end of that month certain fresh complications

had arisen in London. During Mr. Balfour's absence at the Peace Conference, Lord Curzon was in charge of the Foreign Office : and by him two points of considerable difficulty were raised. One concerned a couple of Germans who were acting as political agents in Finland, and whose presence the British Government took exception to and held to be incompatible with the Regent's engagement not to allow German interference in Finland. The matter was, however, complicated by the fact that the two German agents in question had been given diplomatic status as members of the German Legation in Helsingfors. Nevertheless, the Finnish Government asked for their withdrawal, and, when no notice was taken of this request, although repeated, issued a request to deport the two men. This had the desired effect : they left Finland, and one obstacle interfering with the relations between the British and the Finnish Governments had been removed.

That was relatively simple : but at the same time Lord Curzon brought up a highly complicated question, of which there had been rumblings before during the Regent's visit to England, the question concerning the Finnish Reds who had joined the British forces on the Murman Coast, and there been drafted into a special legion of some twelve hundred men. It was now suggested to the Finnish Government that their latest measure of amnesty for the Reds, proclaimed on December 7th, 1918, might be extended to this Finnish Legion. Lord Curzon stressed that it was not a question of asking for a free pardon for such Red leaders as had joined the Legion : but that since the majority of the members of the Legion had not taken a specially active part in the Red rising in Finland, he felt that they might be put on a level with the majority of the Reds in Finland. The suggested analogy was, however, not an exact one : and on this point the Regent, in view of the internal situation in Finland, had no option but to prove unyielding. Meanwhile, the Finnish Legion was giving the British authorities a taste of what Finnish Reds were like, by getting into a condition of unrest

which was almost indistinguishable from open mutiny. It was therefore, on April 10th, as an alternative to the original proposal, put to the Finnish Government whether the latter would agree to the appointment of a mixed commission, consisting of three British officers and two or three 'moderate' representatives of the Finnish Legion, which would discuss with the Finnish authorities the legal position of the legionaries, since the amnesty was not extended to them. The Commission need not even disembark in Finland, but might meet the Finnish representative on board the steamer which was bringing it from Murmansk; and the whole plan sprang from a wish to keep the legionaries quiet. To this proposal the Regent gave his assent: and thus on both points raised by Lord Curzon the Finnish Government had shown its goodwill. By the end of April nothing really any longer stood in the way of England's recognition of Finland.

The attitude of the United States, as late as April 23rd, was understood to be that recognition would be given if the new Government obtained a vote of confidence from the Diet, which was a foregone conclusion: but the old condition that Finland was to submit to the decision of the Peace Conference regarding her frontiers cropped up once more in this connexion. At this stage Mr. Herbert Hoover intervened very handsomely on behalf of Finland. Writing to President Wilson on April 26th, he urged the immediate recognition of Finland's independence. He stressed that elections had taken place: that a responsible Cabinet had been formed; and that this administration, as to its political orientation, was Liberal. He further drew a distressing picture of the difficulties which Finland was encountering because her political status was not defined, instancing the impossibility for her of using Finnish bank balances in America. In conclusion, he remarked that he understood that a great many people considered that General Mannerheim cast a dark shadow over the existing Government, but to this the fact that Finland, under this very shadow, had retained its democratic institutions ought to be a sufficient answer.

Matters finally came to a head at a meeting on May 3rd of the 'Conseil des Cinq,' the Committee which did duty for the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference. M. Pichon, Lord Hardinge, Mr. Lansing, and Count Makino, one of Japan's delegates, were present; no Italian representative attended, the Italian delegation having left Paris some days before as a protest against the treatment of Italy by the Conference. Mr. Harold Nicolson, in *Peacemaking* 1919, has drawn an incisive cameo of this meeting, which he describes as 'a scrubby affair compared to the old Clemenceau-Ll. G.-Wilson days'; and of the deliberations, so far as they affected Finland, he says no more than 'They agree to the recognition of Finland.' Actually, this decision was reached after a somewhat rambling discussion, to which Count Makino contributed a red herring by expressing the hope that Finland would give assistance to General Yudenitch's expedition against St. Petersburg then in the course of organization. The result of the deliberation was to the effect that the British and American Governments were, each separately, to recognize the independence of Finland and her *de facto* Government. After this independence had been recognized and regular diplomatic representatives had been appointed in Finland, the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and France were, through their representatives, to urge the Finnish Government to acknowledge the decisions of the Peace Conference regarding the frontiers of Finland. Moreover, the Finnish Government would be urged to treat those Red Finns who had fought in the armies of the Allies in a liberal and magnanimous spirit, granting them an amnesty. Finally, Count Makino was to communicate those decisions to his Government, so that it could take analogous measures.

On May 6th, England formally recognized the independence of Finland without any reservations; and the next day the United States followed suit. The news was naturally received in Finland with immense gratification, and the result, achieved after so many vicissitudes and difficulties, represented a splendid personal victory for the Regent, whose

policy was thus vindicated in every respect. Nothing was, incidentally, ever heard again of Finland having to submit to the decisions of the Peace Conference regarding her frontiers—indeed, the question as to these never came up at the Peace Conference. Recognitions of Finland's independence now followed quickly from other States: of the remaining Great Powers, Japan notified her recognition on May 25th, and Italy hers on June 27th. Other States whose recognitions yet came in during Gustaf Mannerheim's Regency were Belgium, Chile, Peru, and China. The international status of Finland was thus placed on a broad and permanent basis.

The recognition of Finland's independence by all the Great Allied Powers was all the more welcome, since at that time there was still determined opposition to the idea of an independent Finland among the leaders of the various White Russian forces, which were preparing to overthrow the Bolshevik regime and still, to some extent, remained a political factor to be reckoned with. Paris, London, and Stockholm were teeming with White Russian conspirators in the spring and summer of 1919: hopes were running high, Admiral Kolchak's resources in Siberia were held to be enormous, despite the defeat inflicted upon him by the Reds, General Denikin's success in his drive against Moscow was magnified, and the expedition which General Yudenitch, the conqueror of Trebizond and Erzerum in 1916, was organizing in Estonia was soon to sweep the Bolsheviks out of St. Petersburg. General Sir Hubert Gough arrived in Helsingfors for consultations with the Regent regarding the Yudenitch campaign, which, when it did materialize in the late summer, had considerable naval assistance from England. General Yudenitch saw the Regent, too: but no headway could be made with any scheme for Finnish co-operation, since the attitude of the Russians remained so utterly out of touch with realities.

The spring and summer of 1919 were not without activity on Finland's eastern frontier. The population of Eastern Carelia were getting more and more anxious to throw off the Bolshevik yoke: they turned to Finland for help, and

although the Finnish Government did not intervene officially, it yet gave assistance towards the forming and equipping of a small volunteer force of two battalions, which crossed the frontier at the end of April. Operations against the Bolsheviks were at first crowned with success, and two frontier parishes in Eastern Carelia, Repola and Porajärvi, now decided to proclaim their incorporation with Finland. The Finnish Government in consequence took these districts under its protection. The operations of the volunteer force continued with fluctuating fortune ; and towards the end of the summer this corps was forced to withdraw : but Repola and Porajärvi remained for the time being under Finnish control.

On the home front all was, on the whole, very quiet, rather a remarkable fact seeing that a sanguinary rising had been liquidated only the year before, and that the Socialist Party still numbered a strength indicated by the fact that 40 per cent of the membership of the Diet had been elected on the Socialist ticket. Moreover, there was always Russia stirring up internal trouble through her agents : and in April there was, as a matter of fact, discovered a Red plot, with its headquarters in Wiborg, and ramifications over the whole of the country : to some slight extent it had even managed to communicate disaffection to the army. The timely discovery led, however, to a complete collapse of the scheme. In the Diet the attitude of the Socialists gave evidence of a considerably chastened spirit, even if no exception at any time was taken to the excesses of 1917 and 1918. Something of the old spirit came out in a couple of interpellations addressed to the Government regarding the activities of the free corps operating in Eastern Carelia : but it was all, relatively, very small beer. No incident worth mentioning marred the normal course of the parliamentary debates, and the Socialists even secured the election of one of their number as the first Deputy-Speaker.

The most urgent task for the Diet was to settle the future Constitution of Finland : and the relative Bill was submitted to the Diet on May 13th. By it the monarchical principle had

been given up in favour of the republican one, and no attempt was made, in the course of its passage through the Diet, to revert to the monarchical basis. The personal inclination of the Regent was decidedly in favour of monarchy: he had freely admitted this in the course of the endless deliberations which took place on the constitutional question the year before. Although for characteristic reasons of loyalty he had done what he could to gain support for the candidature of Prince Friedrich Karl in England and France, he was himself all along averse to the idea of a German king, holding that, if the Åland question ruled out a Swedish candidate, a Danish prince might have been chosen with advantage.

The parliamentary fortunes of the Bill for the new Constitution were decidedly chequered: among the right-wing elements of the Diet it was held to concentrate executive power with Parliament, and the representatives of the Swedish Finns felt that adequate guarantees were not provided in it for the Swedish minority in Finland. At one point, indeed, the three Swedish Cabinet Ministers tendered their resignations in view of the declarations made by the Prime Minister in the Diet regarding the language rights of the two nationalities in Finland: their resignation was, however, not accepted by the Regent. Eventually, on June 14th, when the Bill came up for the last reading, it was moved that the Bill be left in abeyance until the meeting of the first Diet after the elections: unless the matter be declared urgent. This was in accordance with an enactment in the existing Constitution of Finland, which stipulated that such a declaration of urgency must be supported by at least five-sixths of the numbers voting. The vote on the urgency question was 163 for and 33 against: in other words, the motion for urgency was lost, since the minority had one vote more than was barely necessary. On this vote the whole question was thus to be shelved until the next elections.

The parliamentary devices provided by the Finnish Constitution were now resorted to by the supporters of the Bill in order to remedy this situation. The Government Bill was

resuscitated, with certain modifications, as a private members' Bill, and pressure was exercised by the majority upon the minority, in order to secure its passage. These manœuvres proved successful: already a week later, on June 21st, the urgency of the matter was voted with 173 votes against 23; and thereupon the Bill, as amended, was adopted, with 165 votes against 22.

This Constitution declares Finland to be a Republic, having at its head a President, elected for six years: the Cabinet, which is the executive power, is appointed by him but must possess the confidence of the Diet which consists of a single Chamber of two hundred members, elected by a system of proportional representation, every Finnish citizen, man or woman, of twenty-four or over having the right to vote. The President is, too, the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish armed forces, but in time of war he is entitled to transfer his command to another person. The right to dissolve Parliament is vested in the President, who, after a vote of censure, can retain a Cabinet in office, pending the new elections. An Act of Parliament requires normally the assent of the President in order to become law; if he does not ratify an Act within three months of its having been passed he is considered to have refused to ratify it. If the President refuses to ratify an Act of Parliament it can only become law if it is adopted once again in exactly the same form by the Diet after a general election has taken place. On the language question it is declared that Finnish and Swedish are the national languages of the Republic, and that the rights of the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking population are guaranteed on like principles.

The Constitution, some of whose main points have here been briefly summarized, thus gives considerable powers to the President; but it is essentially based upon democratic principles, and provides all possible safeguards against the overriding of the wishes of the electorate.

The Act of Parliament having been submitted to the Regent, he naturally took some time considering it and scrutinized it with the utmost care. Whatever his own per-

sonal preferences, he had never committed himself publicly in the question of monarchy versus republic: and the main thing was for him, as expressed in his address to the assembled Government on May 16th, 1918, that 'the helm of the ship of the Finnish State is placed in a strong hand which is not reached by party strife and not forced, through compromises, to whittle down the power of the Government.' It was now for him to decide whether the new Constitution answered this conception; the question was all the more complicated since during those very days the Russian problem forced itself upon his attention very forcibly. In this connexion it was represented to the Regent by a group of prominent Finnish politicians and soldiers, largely responsible for the policy which had led up to the proclamation of Finnish independence, that the time was ripe for a policy of action against the Bolsheviks. The main basis of this policy was to be the capture of St. Petersburg by the Finnish army: the Russian capital was thereupon to be handed over to the White Russians, whose goodwill thereby would be acquired, and the solution of the Eastern Carelian question in a sense favourable to Finland would then follow more or less automatically. Help from the Allies would, of course, be essential, but it was regarded as likely that this would be forthcoming. In order to carry this plan into effect the Regent was urged to make use of the powers which he still, under the ancient Constitution, undoubtedly possessed: he was to dissolve the Diet, appoint a non-parliamentary but technically ultra-efficient Government, and proceed to make war. The promoters of this idea were, as already stressed, by no means irresponsible, conspiratorial hot-heads, and there is much to be said for the contention that action on those lines, at that time, might have nipped things in the bud, thereby ridding the world once and for all of the Bolshevik nightmare. Having weighed every argument for and against, Gustaf Mannerheim in the end decided against the plan submitted to him; and since, all things considered, the Constitution adopted by the Diet in the main gave the safeguards which he

considered essential for his country's welfare, he ratified it on July 17th. The various fundamental laws which Finland had inherited from the past were thus swept away by one stroke of the pen: and her new democratic Constitution, ushering in Finland's future, bears the signature of Gustaf Mannerheim.

While the work of the Diet naturally had had to be concentrated upon the preparation of the new Constitution, during the three or four months which had elapsed since it met, no one knew better than Gustaf Mannerheim that thereby only a framework had been created; and his mind had for some time been occupied on a number of schemes of far-reaching social reform to be tackled as soon as circumstances permitted. His personal popularity in the country gave every indication of being in the ascendant: popular enthusiasm on his public appearances in Helsingfors and elsewhere showed no sign of abating, quite the reverse, in fact. At the end of May he was the central figure at a great University celebration in Helsingfors, the ancient ceremony of the conferment of degrees known as the 'Promotion,' which, in Finland, only takes place at intervals of several years, and has an enormous repercussion in the country. An honorary Doctorate of Philosophy was conferred upon the Regent, while his daughter was elected to the traditional office of 'Public Binder of the Wreaths'—the wreaths of laurels for the graduates. His speech at this gathering of the summits of Finnish scholarship and public life, exalting the work of the toilers of the intellect, made a profound impression.

The date of the Presidential election had been fixed for July 25th, and in anticipation of it an election campaign of considerable intensity was launched in the Press—again, of course, without any restrictions being imposed upon the opposition. It was, naturally, too much to expect that the Socialists would vote for the Regent: though in this connexion it should be stressed that his personality was inspiring them with respect, and that, moreover, as the man who had reconciled Finland with the Allies, he had to some extent taken the wind out of their sails. It was also known every-

where in Finland that he had always, during the War of Independence, unflinchingly resisted the very idea of reprisals by the Whites, and that the disastrous policy of the prison camps had been adopted by the then Government in defiance of his warnings. Certain it is that during the Presidential election campaign of 1919 Gustaf Mannerheim was never attacked personally by the Finnish Socialists in terms comparable to those employed since by his left-wing slanderers abroad, notably in England : seen in its historical perspective, all this explains why the Finnish Socialists should have rallied behind him in 1939, and, incidentally, why this should have exasperated so many left-wingers outside Finland. Still, at the time, the objection of the Finnish Socialists to Gustaf Mannerheim as President was an obvious one of principle. More surprising was the fact that the Progressives and the Agrarians, who yet had supported him until then, now came out against him. The time has not yet come for setting out all the details of this parliamentary intrigue, or, indeed, the full story of how an amnesty for the Finnish Reds from Murmansk was rushed through the Cabinet during an absence of the Regent from the capital, during which time the Prime Minister acted as his deputy ; but this much may be said, that to some extent the curious but deep-seated Finnish inferiority complex came into play in the demand for a ' purely Finnish man ' as President, despite the fact that the rights of the Swedish minority had just been solemnly sanctioned in the new Constitution. The supporters of Gustaf Mannerheim were the Party of National Union and the Swedish Party : and at their request Gustaf Mannerheim after considerable resistance agreed to stand for the Presidency. His opponents rallied round Dr. K. J. Ståhlberg, President of the Supreme Court of Administrative Justice, in politics ranking as a Progressive and possessing a creditable record as a civil servant and Judge, but without any international standing and singularly uninspiring as the leader of a nation.

As regards the procedure of the election, the Diet had decreed that while Presidential elections in the future were to

be effected by a specially chosen body of electors, this first election would be made by the existing Diet. Subsequent experience in Finland has shown that the specially chosen body of electors tends not to be guided by party shibboleths to the same extent as the Diet : and had the same procedure now been followed as in all Finland's subsequent elections, or, indeed, a plebiscite been taken, it is not impossible that Gustaf Mannerheim would have been elected. As the parliamentary position stood, the result was, however, almost a foregone conclusion : Dr. Ståhlberg was elected first President of Finland with 143 votes against 50 that went to Gustaf Mannerheim.

A foregone conclusion, yes : and yet when the result was announced, the effect upon non-Socialist Finland was a stunning one : while the effect abroad was most strikingly shown by the catastrophic fall which occurred in the Finnish exchange. Gustaf Mannerheim himself was not in Helsingfors at the time of the election, having gone to Runni, a Finnish spa, to take the waters. His sister Sophie was with him, and a letter from her to a relative provides an illuminating insight into her brother's attitude over the whole matter :

' Gustaf himself takes the thing as magnificently as you knew he would take it. But truly one's heart bleeds when one thinks how he had lived himself into things here and the great programme of social reform which he had meant to carry through. It is strange that it should always fall to him to sweep the way for others. But I suppose there is some meaning in all this, at least one must believe that. It is a pity, however, about the people which has been deceived by clever political manœuvres. He receives every day piles of telegrams from all parts of the country.'

Of official oratory in recognition of what Gustaf Mannerheim had done for Finland during his Regency there was plenty when the constitutional position was formally wound up : a more significant act of gratitude was the one to which the initiative was taken the day after the Presidential election,



GUSTAF MANNERHEIM AT RUNNI, SUMMER 1919.



BARON'S SOPHIE MANNFRIED

when almost all Finnish newspapers published an appeal for a national gift to be presented to Gustaf Mannerheim. The sum of seven and a half million Finnish marks was brought together in a brief space of time and handed to him with a request that he would draw the annual interest of this sum all his life, and by his will devote the capital to any object he cared to designate.

It was, however, one day in the late summer of 1919 that popular affection for him found its most enthusiastic expression. That was on August 16th, when representatives of all the defence corps of Finland assembled in Helsingfors elected him their Honorary Commander-in-Chief; and he once again, as on May 16th, 1918, took up his position at the Runeberg monument in the centre of the city to watch the march past of the troops. Once again did the air resound with the electrifying rhythms of the ancient marching tunes of Finland, one of which, and in particular the 'March of the Jaegers of Carelia,' had almost acquired the character of a 'signature tune' for the White leader; once again did the fighters from Tammerfors wear the spruce branches in their caps. Nobody who witnessed this unforgettable scene of popular homage and exultation could for one moment harbour a doubt that the man round whom all this feeling was surging remained his country's greatest individual asset. The sequel has shown the profound truth of such an impression.

CHAPTER XI

THE LONG INTERVAL

IN the early autumn of 1919, Gustaf Mannerheim left Finland for some weeks, bound for England and France and preceded by the fame which his double success as a military leader and a statesman had brought him. Complicated questions of foreign policy still affected the international position of Finland, and the distinguished Finn, eager to do his best for his country, had no difficulty in obtaining a hearing for the views which he was anxious to urge. The Åland question figured prominently in international political discussions just then; and, at the end of September, Clemenceau produced a political sensation of the first order by declaring categorically in a speech in the French Chamber of Deputies, that the Peace Conference was going to see to it that the legitimate interests of Sweden as regards the Åland Islands would receive satisfaction. Gustaf Mannerheim now seized the opportunity, provided by his stay in Paris, of obtaining a direct personal contact with Clemenceau in order to correct such misconceptions of the Åland question as had developed in him, largely no doubt as a result of influence exercised upon the French Premier by the new Socialist Prime Minister of Sweden, Hjalmar Branting, whom Clemenceau had known for many years. The Tiger was far from responsive when first seen by the Finnish visitor: but he was not a son of the Vendée for nothing, and when Gustaf Mannerheim began to tell him about the heroic rising of the yeomen of Ostrobothnia, he gradually warmed to a saga which presented such obvious parallels to the epic of the *chouannerie*. In the end, after his interlocutor had developed to him the Finnish case

in the dispute about Åland, Clemenceau declared that he had been misunderstood; that he had solely spoken about the legitimate interests of Sweden without binding the French Government to hand over the archipelago to Sweden; and that he would take steps to clear up the misapprehensions regarding his attitude which were current. By thus, in effect, bringing about a change of mind in Clemenceau, at the time almost the all-powerful arbiter of the world, Gustaf Mannerheim made a most material contribution towards that solution of the Åland question in favour of Finland, which materialized nearly two years later.

The present writer had, about this time, an opportunity of seeing for himself in how masterly a fashion Gustaf Mannerheim could deal with a situation of the kind that has just been described. It had been recognized as essential that the late Regent of Finland should see Lord Northcliffe, whose attitude towards Finland, at the time, was not one of unqualified sympathy. An interview was arranged at which I was asked to be present, and the two Finnish visitors were shown late one evening into Lord Northcliffe's study at Carlton House Terrace. From the moment conversation began, Gustaf Mannerheim captivated the attention of his host completely: the latter listened with the utmost intentness to the exposition, which went into some detail, of Finland's struggle and Finland's case in the international controversies then pending. At the end Lord Northcliffe said: "General Mannerheim, in one hour you have given me a completely new perception of what Finland stands for. My whole influence is henceforth unreservedly at your disposal."

His consultations with a number of leading statesmen in England and France now caused a conviction to develop in Gustaf Mannerheim—namely, that the moment had come for Finland to deal a decisive blow at Bolshevism by capturing St. Petersburg. It was a reversion to the idea which, as we saw, had been urged upon him by a number of people in Finland some four months earlier: only that since those days some important changes in the international situation had

taken place. For one thing, the prospects of Allied help were now much more concrete ; and secondly, the checks experienced by the Yudenitch attack on St. Petersburg had entailed a great change in the attitude of the White Russians towards Finnish independence. The influential group of Russian *émigrés*, of which M. Sazonov was the *spiritus rector*, now no longer raised any objection to the idea of that independence and begged for Finnish action to be taken. Gustaf Mannerheim therefore from Paris addressed an open letter to the President of Finland, which was published in the Finnish Press on November 2nd, and in which he urged that the Finnish army should march on St. Petersburg. "The eyes of the world are fixed upon us," he stressed, "and all the friends of Finland ask themselves with anxiety, if we are going to prove worthy of our position as a free people, and do our part by contributing, in the measure of our forces, to the building up of peace in Europe. The question is being asked if our people, which itself a year ago on the brink of annihilation called out for help, now is going to reject the appeal which has been made to it." The idea here developed had widespread support in Finland : but the President of Finland turned a deaf ear to the arguments of his predecessor : and so the last chance of action along the lines suggested was missed.

On his return to Finland shortly afterwards, a position of enormous authority and influence naturally at once became that of Gustaf Mannerheim, though he had strictly no official position—apart from his rank as General, he was merely the *honorary*, not effective, Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Corps of Finland. The part of political intriguer was most decidedly not one for which his personality was cast ; and in his activities as a public man he soon turned his attention to various humanitarian schemes. In conceiving and carrying out all these, he had the expert constructive advice of his sister Sophie unfailingly to draw upon. An initiative of far-reaching importance was taken by him on October 4th, 1920 when he summoned a meeting for the purpose of taking steps

to found a nation-wide organization for Child Welfare. The meeting unanimously decided to proceed with such an organization, which, the meeting resolved, would be called 'General Mannerheim's Organization for Child Welfare,' and its charter is contained in a manifesto to the people of Finland which Gustaf Mannerheim issued the next day :

'On the first anniversary of the outbreak of the War of Independence, January 28th, 1919, I set aside 50,000 Finnish marks towards the taking of measures for the care and education of children who in the war had lost those by whom they had been maintained, irrespective of the side upon which the latter had fought. My intention was not only to help towards the solution of the most pressing problem of the times—the healing of the wounds of the war—but even more to urge all nobly-minded patriots to unite in one common and conscious effort towards the reconstruction of society and above all the relief of the lot of those whose need seemed to me the greatest and whose suffering is most undeserved and heaviest to bear.

'I feel that I was merely interpreting a thought and a wish which inspired the whole of our people. This thought has during the past two years or so found many expressions and frequently they have been different enough. Great sacrifices have been made and are being made in order to remove, if possible, the causes of an often justified discontent and the bitterness springing therefrom. But how can this discontent and this bitterness be fought successfully as long as the number of destitute, neglected and physically and intellectually defective children may be counted in thousands; how is the chasm between the social strata to be filled, how is the hatred which is being disseminated to disappear as long as large proportions of the rising generation must meet life with undeveloped and misguided intellectual faculties?

'It seems to me that all sacrifices are made in vain if our sorely tried and rudely shaken society is not built up again from the foundations, if an organization is not created which

gives a guarantee that the rising youth of Finland is brought up to health, ability to work, and patriotism. The State, the local committees and private associations show a laudable interest in the remedying of these defects, but the resources of the State have been inadequate, the local committees seem not to be able to spare more than is claimed by the barest necessities of the destitute, and the private associations, upon which the burden of the work for Child Welfare has mainly fallen, have, as a result of the economic crisis, been forced to restrict their activities, many indeed to discontinue them altogether.

‘The future security of our country as an independent State, its internal peace and development as a civilized society demand, however, that the whole of the youth of the country should be brought up so as to become good citizens, and I do not doubt that those, who live and work in this country, will give their full support to an increase of private enterprise in the domain of Child Welfare. The aim must be so to run this work by means of local organizations all over the country and uniformly directed by a central committee, that every child in Finland, from its birth and whilst growing, is enjoying its right to that tenderness and that care which alone can create the conditions necessary in order that the young may develop into good members of the community.

‘For this purpose an organization for the protection of Finland’s children has been created in Helsingfors, and I ask that all women and men of Finland may feel warmly towards this deserving cause and give it their support.’

This manifesto has been quoted at length, because, in a phraseology so characteristic of its author, it provides so convincing a proof of the keenness of his interest in the problems outlined, and the painstaking fashion in which he had acquainted himself with all the details of the questions involved. The success of the appeal was instantaneous: support rallied to it from all over the country and the initial work of organization was soon in hand, the Helsingfors

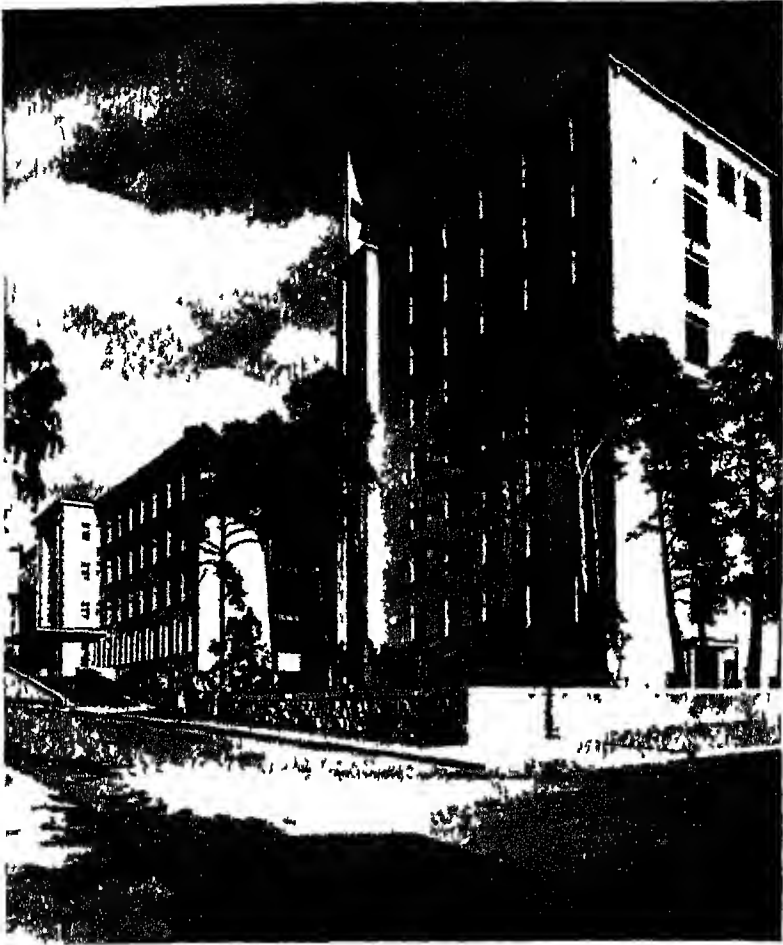
apartment of Gustaf Mannerheim being used as the provisional offices of the new foundation. In little more than a year, the organization had a home of its own, the *Barnens borg* or Castle of the Children in Helsingfors, devoted to the training of workers in the domain of Child Welfare; and the number of local organizations affiliated to the central office in the capital quickly grew, amounting by now to over six hundred. The Government and the Diet have extended support to the scheme in the form of grants of money; and, through the personal intervention of the founder, many of the great industrial undertakings in Finland have financed the setting up of large establishments, known as 'the Mansions of the Children' (*Barnens gårdar*), in which the juvenile offspring of the factory staffs are tended with every care. Striking evidence of the success which has attended the work of the organization is provided, for instance, by the fact that infant mortality in Finland has lately shown a most gratifying decrease. For the older children special organizations known as the Agricultural Clubs provide healthy holiday occupation on the land: this branch of the foundation's activities has always in a particularly high degree been able to count upon the personal interest of Gustaf Mannerheim, who never wearies of paying visits to the holiday camps and chatting with their little inmates. The great organization, some of whose activities have here been briefly sketched, is steadily growing and expanding; and the part which it has played in the remarkable work of social reconciliation lately carried out in Finland is a most important one. The fact that Gustaf Mannerheim's name is associated with it—not as a mere ornamental label, but notoriously as an expression of true and active interest—is also something not to be overlooked in assessing the present situation in Finland.

Another great humanitarian enterprise to which Gustaf Mannerheim began to devote his energies in the years immediately following the establishment of Finnish independence, is the Finnish Red Cross. Up to then, this institution had been one of very restricted range and effectiveness; but on

Gustaf Mannerheim's being elected President in 1921 a radical change took place. The necessary financial basis was secured by the raising of funds through voluntary effort ; the training of doctors and nurses was taken in hand, and stores of medical supplies were accumulated so as to be ready in case of need. The effectiveness of the Finnish Medical Service during the recent war has shown with what care and forethought it had been organized. The construction of a great special hospital for the Finnish Red Cross in Helsingfors was begun in 1931, and the building, which represents the last word in hospital technique, was completed and ready for use a year later.

Gustaf Mannerheim has, however, by no means conceived the activities of the Finnish Red Cross as solely or even mainly limited to war-time. Thus, under his auspices, the Finnish Red Cross has set up a string of cottage hospitals in the remote and desolate districts along the eastern frontier of Finland where previously no provision of medical aid of this kind existed. Moreover, when the economic crisis of the years 1931-1933 produced large numbers of unemployed in Finland, the Finnish Red Cross organized relief work on a very considerable scale and was remarkably successful in keeping distress within limits. Co-operation with other organizations in Finland working for humanitarian ends—notably the Child Welfare Organization—has been very effectively achieved ; and for the linking up with International Red Cross activities, it has been of immense advantage to the Finnish Red Cross to possess a President like Gustaf Mannerheim, who can represent his organization with such unrivalled authority abroad, more especially at the periodical conferences of the International Red Cross.

In the autumn of 1920 an important change took place in the political relations between Finland and Soviet Russia. After lengthy negotiations, peace was concluded between the two countries on October 14th at Dorpat in Estonia. By the treaty then signed, Russia once again recognized ' the realm of Finland within the frontiers of the former Grand Duchy as sovereign and independent ' and moreover ceded to Finland



HOSPITAL OF THE FINNISH RED CROSS, HELSINGFORS, 1932



G. Mannerheim,

FIELD-MARSHAL MANNERHEIM

the Petsamo territory on the Arctic coast, 'to possess for all time with full sovereign rights.' Finland, on the other hand, so as not to jeopardize the safety of St. Petersburg, agreed to raze the Ino fortifications on the Carelian Isthmus and to demilitarize certain islands in the Gulf of Finland; she also undertook not to mount heavy guns on her newly-won Arctic coast, this with a view not to endanger the Russian positions in the neighbourhood. Moreover, the frontier parishes of Repola and Porajärvi in eastern Carelia, which in response to their spontaneous request had been for some time under Finnish administration, were returned to Russia, which, however, bound herself to respect the autonomy and right to self-determination of eastern Carelia. No heed was ever paid by the Russians to this undertaking, and, after the eastern Carelians in their despair had risen unsuccessfully against the Soviet oppression in 1921, a fate tragic beyond words has overtaken their land.

Dr. Ståhlberg's term as President came to an end in 1925. The attitude towards Gustaf Mannerheim of those in power during this period had been one of persistent, if shamefaced, obstruction against any attempts to reinstate the liberator of Finland into an official position in which he could have rendered services to his country commensurate with his unique capabilities. Thus, when in the autumn of 1921 the Defence Corps of Finland had unanimously elected Gustaf Mannerheim their Commander-in-Chief, the President did not ratify their choice—a decision which, characteristically, was loyally accepted by everybody concerned. Meanwhile, Russia was incessantly fomenting internal unrest in Finland; and in the parliamentary elections of 1922—the first of the definitely constituted 'Republic of Finland'—the Communists, now going to the polls as a party distinct from the Socialists, secured no fewer than twenty-seven seats (against fifty-three Socialist seats). This, together with revelations then made public as to the growth of Communist plotting in Finland, was a little too much even for the doctrinaires then in power: and in 1923 the banning of the Communist party was effected.

The urgency of the problems of Finnish defence was also now more widely recognized; and in July, 1924, an English military mission headed by Major-General (now Sir) Walter Kirke proceeded to Finland at the invitation of the Finnish Government, in order to advise on the defence of the country. The work of the mission went on until the beginning of 1925 and produced extremely valuable results, some of which were put to the test and strikingly vindicated when Finland was recently attacked by Russia—in a sense, it is to this period that we can trace the origins of that famous system of defence across the Carelian Isthmus which is usually referred to as the Mannerheim Line.

In 1925 Finland's second presidential election took place: it brought to the head of the Finnish State an Agrarian, Dr. Relander, who had been Speaker of the Diet in 1919. A warm-hearted patriot, Dr. Relander made a gesture much noticed at the time, when, immediately after his election, he made a formal call on Gustaf Mannerheim. For the rest, Dr. Relander's term of office is notable because it saw the first Socialist Cabinet in Finnish history. Appointed in 1926 with M. Väinö Tanner as Prime Minister, it did not, however, remain long in power: and much resentment was caused by its attempt to reduce the State subsidy paid to the Defence Corps. The next year, 1928, brought a great personal sorrow to Gustaf Mannerheim: for his sister Sophie, whose affection and counsel had always meant so enormously much to him, died early in January. Her last years had, intermittently, been overshadowed by illness, but she had yet succeeded in persisting in her activities for the public good, which for some time had had a wide international setting, entailing journeys to America, the Balkans, and elsewhere.

As the years went by there was an increasing sense of uneasiness in Finland at the growth of underground Communist influence; and from a certain section of the Finnish yeoman class there came in the summer of 1930 a peremptory demand for drastic action against the Communists—the keynote was *il faut en finir*. The movement was originally localized in the

parish of Lappo, in southern Ostrobothnia, whose patriotism and fighting spirit we know so well from the War of Independence : but it quickly obtained a great following throughout the country. M. Svinhufvud was now brought back into public life from his retirement, and, as Prime Minister, carried a number of strongly anti-Communist measures through the Diet with the constitutionally requisite two-thirds majority. And at the beginning of the next year, 1931, he was elected the third President of the Finnish Republic.

The Lappo movement which had originated in feelings of true patriotism and had received a nation-wide backing, eventually, after its main objects had been achieved, shrank into something much narrower and more blindly fanatical. It therefore gradually lost its importance, and, after a foolish attempt at a *coup d'état* in 1932, was finally, and not unskilfully, liquidated by M. Svinhufvud.

By that time Gustaf Mannerheim had, for over a year, been restored to Finnish public life in an official position which enabled full use to be made of his abilities. On March 21st, 1931, the President of Finland appointed him President of the Defence Council of Finland : in this capacity he was virtually the head of the Finnish armed forces though, theoretically, in peace-time, the President of the Republic was the Commander-in-Chief. He was now able to devote himself wholeheartedly to the task of which he had never ceased to urge the importance—the strengthening of Finland's powers of defence. Supported as he was by able lieutenants, yet it was obviously he who was the moving and directing spirit of all activities towards that end ; and every day that went by only contributed towards strengthening the position which by now undoubtedly was his—that of the central figure of all Finland.

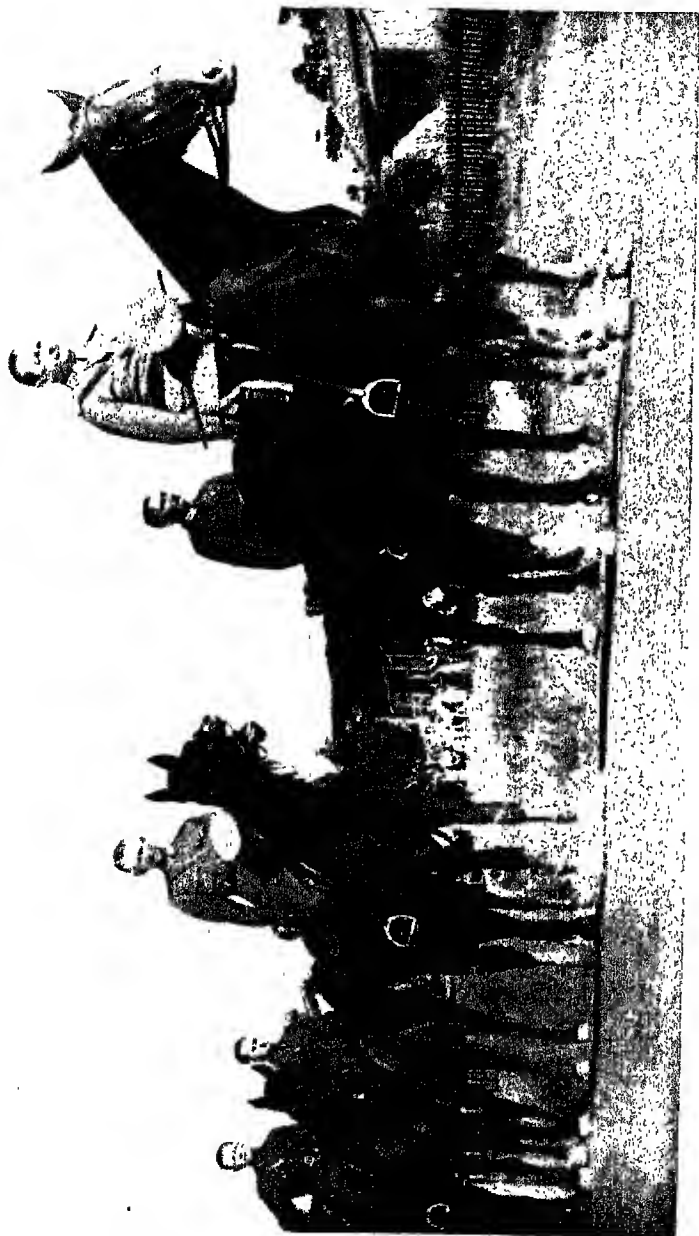
In Helsingfors he now had a house of his own, built by the sea on the Brunnsparcken promontory, with a far-reaching prospect of the Gulf of Finland and its archipelago. At last the wanderer had been able to set out in it all the objects collected in his travels : notably the ride across Asia was made

to revive before one's eyes almost upon every step in these rooms. Family portraits and other pictures by old and modern masters, trophies from hunting expeditions, books on every conceivable subject lining the shelves of the library—all these things and a hundred more reflected the personality of one who, truly, had warmed both hands at the fire of life. And close though the contact with Nature was in this house by the water's edge, yet a closer contact still was provided for the owner by his holiday retreat, a simple summer house on one of the rocky islets that fringe the approach to the peninsula of Hangö.

The year 1932 was, as we saw, marked by the final collapse of the Lappo movement: another notable event which belongs to it is the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Finland and Soviet Russia. By this it was mutually agreed that all disputes which might arise between the two countries, and which could not be settled through the accustomed diplomatic channels, would be submitted to a mixed Conciliation Commission, upon which Finland and Russia would be represented by two members each. All differences of whatever origin, it was further agreed, would be settled between the two countries, 'in a spirit of justice and only by peaceable means.' This non-aggression pact was renewed in 1934—and its validity was then extended until 1945. . . .

1933 brought the fifteenth anniversary of the War of Independence; and under the existing circumstances its celebration released quite a special enthusiasm. The Government also marked the occasion by promoting Gustaf Mannerheim to the rank of Field-Marshal—the first and only one that Finland has had. Among the many speeches which he delivered this spring, one is specially memorable—the speech made in acknowledgment of the toast of his health at the banquet given at Helsingfors on May 16th—the anniversary of the entry of the White army into Helsingfors. It began by emphasizing, from various angles, the value of personality, and continued :

'Once upon a time, the sense of justice—enlightened and



A FIELD SERVICE



THE FIELD-MARSHAL AT MANŒUVRES

built up on time-honoured usage and noble traditions—was, especially for our people, more than the written law, the norm for the life of the nation and the actions of the individual. It was this sense of justice which shaped the personality, gave the character its strength, and brought forth resolution, the will to take risks and the readiness to bear responsibility. Nowadays, it seems to me, opinions are formed in quite a different fashion. It is far less the individual who, under the sense of profound responsibility, makes his decision; it is party opinion which—unhampered by traditional conceptions of honour—under the auspices of the vast agglomerations of people and split-up responsibilities, favours the commonplace, appeals to all that is undeveloped, and drastically hems in the intellectual mobility of the individual. Indeed, many indications suggest, that the struggle and party strife of to-day are on the point of affecting the very soul of the people. I hope, however, and believe, that if this is the case, it is yet something transitory. Ever since my boyhood in the ancient lands of Finland Proper, I retain a clear memory of the rough chivalry of the Finnish people, of its straight sense of honour and its simple and secure faith: and from the years of Finland's struggle I know too that this nation has the courage and will to go forward, and that it is capable of great sacrifices.

‘The greatest strength of a little country is unity. Let us therefore forget division and mistrust and no longer waste the strength of the nation upon questions of secondary nature. We all need one another, and God grant that we all, shoulder to shoulder, may be strong enough.

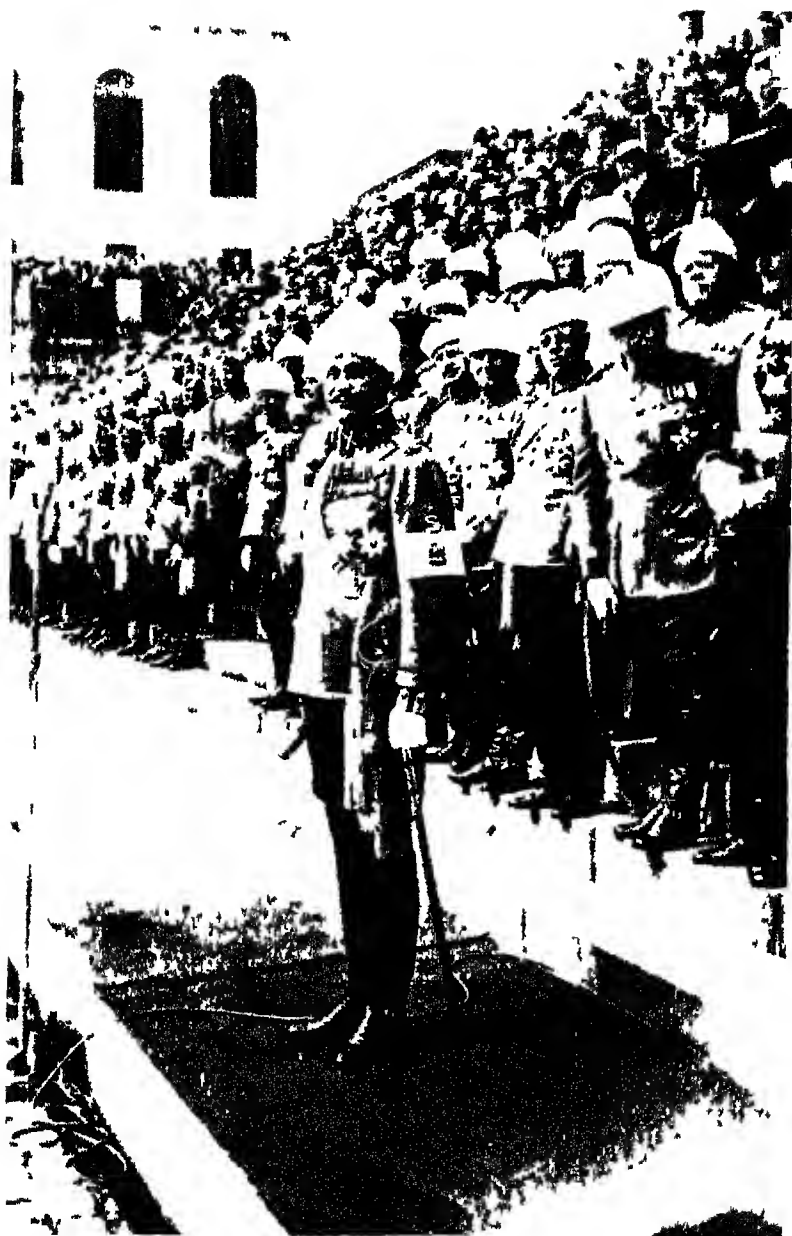
‘Let us find one another, let us understand the exalted ideal of youth, let us find the watchword which reaches everyone in this country, and, on the paths that we severally pursue, enables us all to meet at the common aim of our aspirations.

‘I raise my glass to the man who takes responsibility and is able to carry it.’

That was how the Finnish White leader spoke in the very year when the Nazi revolution conquered Germany, with

uniformity and 'levelling up' as its watchword—the contrast is a striking one and should make some irresponsible critics of Gustaf Mannerheim pause and reflect.

About this time, indeed, an observer of Finnish life would be struck by the fact that a definite change was coming over it—a change towards that unity which Gustaf Mannerheim had all along been urging upon his people. To some extent it was inevitably a case of the old bitterness dying down now that the War of Independence lay fifteen years back ; but there were other reasons as well. One great social reform carried out in the early days of Finnish independence was now beginning to bear fruit—the measure which made it possible for every Finnish farmer to acquire for himself the land upon which he worked—and when it is borne in mind that close upon sixty per cent of the population of Finland is engaged upon agriculture, the importance of this measure leaps to the eye. Moreover, there was the fact that the co-operative movement in Finland was going from strength to strength, bringing prosperity to hundreds of thousands of consumer co-operatives : and at the head of this phenomenally successful movement stood Väinö Tanner, who at the same time was the leader of the Socialists of Finland. Little wonder then that the Communist menace within Finland was beginning to recede : nor was sympathy with Communism of the Soviet brand helped on by the harrowing tales which gradually reached Finland from across the frontier regarding the endless cruelties of the anti-*Kulak* campaign, carried out with particular ferocity in eastern Carelia and other districts inhabited by Finns or their near racial relatives. When in 1936 an eastern Carelian Red, Väinö Antikainen, was arrested in Finland, the whole of the country turned away in horror from this *revenant* of the Red Terror : for this man had, in 1922, burnt one of his White victims alive. The whole concept of the defence of Finland against Soviet Russia now acquired a different significance in large sections of the population : and the man who symbolized Finland's deter-



MILITARY REVIEW, HELSINGFORS



THE FIELD-MARSHAL AND TWO HUNTING TROPHIES

mination to stand up to Soviet aggression—Gustaf Mannerheim—became increasingly the figure to whom all eyes turned, in pride and affection : all the more so as the children of Finland, the sick and the indigent, all knew him to be their best helper and friend.

England continued to see quite a lot of Gustaf Mannerheim : and in 1936 he came here twice officially. First in January, as the representative of his country at the funeral of King George V, his martial figure attracting general attention in the striking uniform with the white fur cap as he walked in the procession which slowly moved through London amid the vast and silent crowds. Then, in September he again visited England, this time as the guest of the British Government for the purpose of acquainting himself with various aspects of the British war machine. He watched manœuvres on Salisbury Plain and visited a number of factories for the production of war material ; the proceedings culminated in a banquet given at Lancaster House when the then Secretary for War, Mr. A. Duff Cooper, was in the Chair and paid a singularly eloquent and profoundly appreciative tribute to the distinguished Finnish visitor.

New general elections in Finland in 1936 brought little change to the relative strength of the different political parties in the Diet. Early in the next year, M. Svinhufvud vacated the post of President of Finland : as his successor was elected M. Kallio, an influential member of the Agrarian party and former Prime Minister of Finland. There was, in consequence, a change of Government; the new Cabinet represented a distinct veering towards the left. Its basis was, in fact, a coalition between Progressives and Socialists, the Prime Minister, Dr. Cajander, being a member of the first-mentioned party, while M. Tanner, the Socialist leader, became Minister of Finance. Characteristic of the new spirit in Finland is the circumstance that there was never a hint that the appointment of this left-wing Cabinet should lead to any change in Gustaf Mannerheim's status. It is also interesting to record, in the light of after events, that about this time Litvinov, the Soviet

Commissar for Foreign Affairs, went out of his way to stress publicly the sympathy of the Russian people with Finnish freedom : and declared that Soviet Russia was ever anxious of establishing with her neighbour the most friendly relations, based upon an unqualified respect for Finland's independence and the permanence of the common frontier.

During the winter of 1937 Gustaf Mannerheim visited India and did some very successful big-game shooting, notably with the Maharajah of Nepal ; he then, via London, returned to Finland where he was eagerly awaited, since his seventieth birthday fell on June 4th. It was an absolutely united Finland which on this occasion tendered a tribute of appreciation and gratitude to her great son—incidentally, not looking his age in the least. Not one dissentient voice was heard ; and it was the yeoman President of Finland—a ‘ pure Finnish man,’ if ever there was one—who at a celebration in Helsingfors, spoke for the whole country. An address from all the surviving members of the two administrations of his Regency deserves to be quoted, since it admirably sums up Gustaf Mannerheim's public performance up to this time :

‘ On your taking up the post of Regent, you stressed in your proclamation to the people of Finland, how heavy was the work which had to be carried out after all the destruction and unrest of the past. It was imperative to relieve the distress and the suffering which the war had entailed. It was imperative so to settle our internal conditions, that the people of Finland, in one common effort, calmly and securely, could try to heal all the wounds inflicted upon it and effect a general reconciliation ; and moreover enjoy its newly-won freedom. It was imperative to create a basis for the belief that this nation, on receiving from the other Powers the recognition of her independence, won in hard struggle, itself was prepared to defend that independence, like one man ; and that it would retain the respect of the nations and grow to such strength that it worthily could live its own national life and proceed on the path of historical evolution.



THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DINNER LANCASTER HOUSE SEPTEMBER 1946



TIGER SHOOTING IN INDIA, 1937

‘ You, Field-Marshal, were the leader in this effort. Your personal share in the work for Finland’s independence, for strengthening the international position of the country and for the establishment of friendly relations with the foreign Powers, your share in the Åland question, in the sanctioning of the constitution, in the basic organization, by legislative action, of the defence of the country, in the building up of the structure of the Defence Corps, in the relief of distress and in many other questions, for which your point of view and your work have been decisive, the acute observation of political facts, the far-reaching vision and the endeavour to obtain lasting results which is characteristic of you—all this has inscribed your name on the pages of our history and shown you to be as great a statesman in days of peace as you are a leader of armies in war-time.’

CHAPTER XII

THE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION, 1939-1940: HIS COUNTRY'S PALADIN FOR THE THIRD TIME

IN the midst of a world where one political sensation succeeded the other, and the danger of a European war was drawing visibly nearer, Finland spent the year 1938 quietly and uneventfully enough. It brought the twentieth anniversary of the War of Independence which was celebrated with undiminished fervour all over the country, the figure of Gustaf Mannerheim standing out all the more strikingly against the background of the exploits of 1918, since by now an entire generation had grown up, to which that heroic campaign already had acquired something of the character of a legend. For the rest, Finland, with her devotion to athletics, was tremendously excited about the fact that the next Olympic Games were booked to take place at Helsingfors in 1940: and the preparations for this great gathering of the nations were being pushed on with the utmost zest.

The summer of 1939 brought a general election, but once again virtually no change in the parliamentary situation, and the same left-wing Government continued in charge of affairs. Meanwhile, in the course of the spring, disquieting rumours began to spread concerning the intentions of Russia with regard to Finland: it was affirmed that she was insisting on a considerable cession of Finnish territory as part of her price for signing a pact with the Western democracies. At a time when treaties were being trampled under foot every day, it was obvious that the non-aggression pact between Finland and Russia offered the former country no dependable safeguards. Hence Finland took what steps she could to strengthen the defence of her eastern frontier, notably of the



A RECLINING PORTRAIT STUDY



A RECENT PORTRAIT STUDY

Mannerheim Line which guarded the access to Finland through the Carelian Isthmus: and large numbers of young men volunteered during their holidays to give help in this work of fortification. A warm welcome was extended to that trusted friend of Finland, Sir Walter Kirke, when, in the early summer, he re-visited the scene of his advisory activities in 1924-1925.

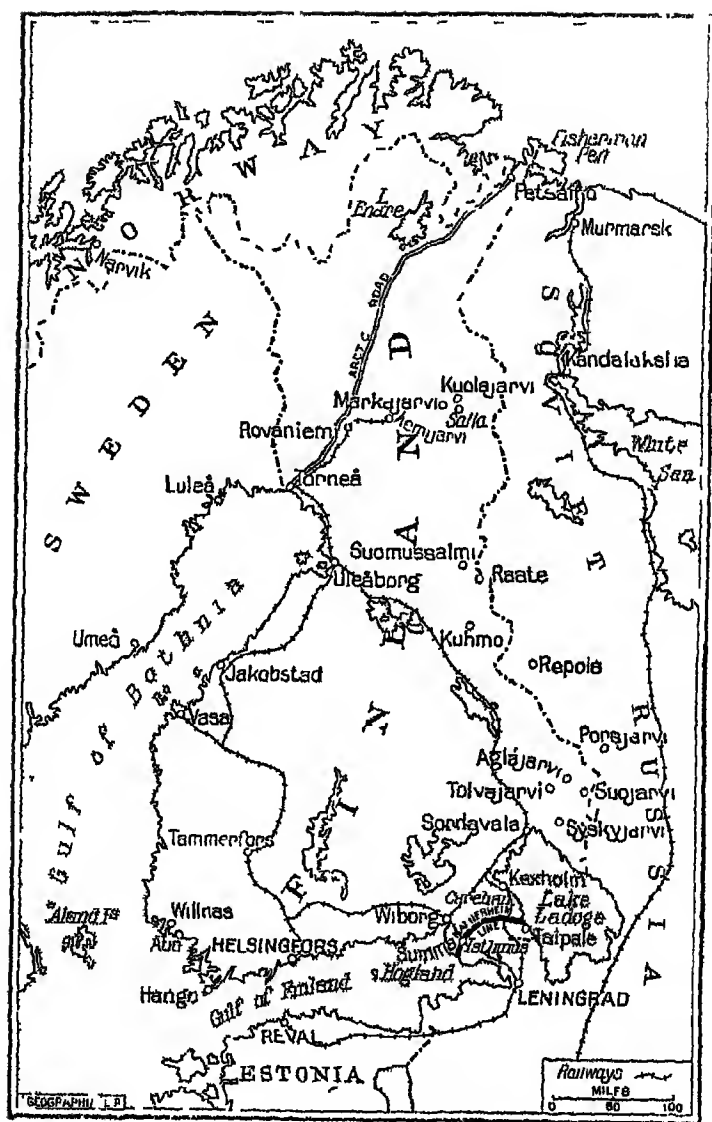
On the outbreak of war in September, Finland at once declared her neutrality: but the grave dangers ahead of her were obvious from the moment of the conclusion of the Russo-German pact and the events which led up to a crisis now followed upon one another in quick succession. First, Poland was stabbed in the back by Russia about the middle of September; then, one after the other, the three Baltic republics were dragooned into submission to Russia: finally, on October 5th, Finland was requested to send a special representative to Moscow, for a discussion of political and economic questions. Everyone knew what this meant.

The Finnish Government decided to comply with the Soviet request, and sent, as her representative to Moscow, Dr. Paasikivi, whom the reader will remember as Prime Minister of Finland from May to December, 1918; he had also been President of the Finnish delegation in charge of the negotiations which led up to the Peace of Dorpat in 1920, and from 1936 onwards had filled the post of Finnish Minister in Stockholm. On October 12th he met Stalin and Molotov, the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, at the Kremlin and was handed proposals which obviously aimed at the complete annihilation of Finnish independence. The ostensible reasons given were that Russia wanted to provide for the safety of Leningrad, and satisfy herself that Finland was going consistently to pursue a policy of friendship towards Russia. With this end in view, Russia demanded, to start with, a thirty years' lease of the port of Hangö and territory adjoining it for use as a naval base. Russia also required Finland to hand over to her a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland and of the Finnish mainland territory, a slice of the Carelian

Isthmus, as well as, in the far north, the western portion of the Fisherman Peninsula, which guards the approach to Petsamo. All fortifications on either side of the frontier between Finland and Russia were to be razed ; and Finland was to agree to an additional clause to the existing non-aggression pact between her and Russia, binding both parties not to join any group or alliances directly or indirectly hostile to either country. As a sop for agreeing to these proposals, Finland was to receive from Russia parts of the districts of Repola and Porajärvi in Eastern Carelia : and Russia also declared that she would not object to the Åland Islands being fortified by Finland single-handed.

As regards Repola and Porajärvi, it may be remarked at the outset that—as the Finnish Government took care to stress—a portion of these districts could not by any stretch of imagination be regarded as economically balancing the sacrifices which Finland was asked to make. It was one thing for the Finnish Government to occupy that territory in 1919 in response to a direct appeal from the local population desperately anxious to be shielded from Bolshevik tyranny ; and another to accept part of these poor and thinly populated districts in exchange for territories of entirely different value. Besides, having been so thoroughly Bolshevized, they were, if taken over with inhabitants and all, no particularly acceptable addition to the Finnish State : if not an actual Trojan Horse.

Sweeping as the Russian demands upon Finland were, the Finnish Government yet examined them objectively, weighing carefully the pros and cons ; and on October 23rd, Dr. Paasikivi, this time accompanied by M. Tanner, presented himself again at the Kremlin, bringing with him the counter-proposals of the Finnish Government. These went a long way towards meeting the demands of Russia, agreeing to the cession of most of the Islands in the Gulf of Finland and accepting the principle of a frontier adjustment on the Carelian Isthmus. Only when it came to the question of Hangö, did the Finnish Government make it clear, that



THE WAR IN FINLAND, 1939-1940

acquiescence in the Russian demands was ruled out by it : this on the ground that ' the mere cession of military bases to a foreign Power is in itself incompatible with unconditional neutrality, as this is understood in Finland and elsewhere.'

The Finnish counter-proposals did not satisfy the Soviet Government : and for three weeks Finland was kept in a state of utmost suspense as the negotiations between the two Governments proceeded, the veil of official secrecy never being lifted during this time. A visit, which the President of Finland in October paid to Stockholm, where the three Scandinavian kings met him, was made the occasion for much exhibitionism of a political nature. Indeed, one sometimes feels tempted to regret that Finnish patriotic songs should musically be so haunting : for they will always make Scandinavian gatherings indulge in a bout of community singing, after which they disperse under the happy delusion that something has been done for Finland. In the later negotiations, the Finnish Government went well beyond her original concessions, agreeing for instance to hand the western part of the Fisherman Peninsula to Russia : but nothing that Finland could offer would satisfy Stalin. Negotiations therefore broke down, and Dr. Paasikivi and M. Tanner on November 13th left Moscow for Helsingfors, expressing, in a courteously worded note to the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, the hope that at some future date the negotiations might bring about a result satisfactory to both parties.

Despite the fact that a campaign of hysterically violent abuse of Finland was now launched over the Russian wireless and in the Russian press, there was a pathetic hope in Finland that the difference would now be settled through diplomatic negotiations, and many evacuees in consequence returned to the cities which they had left when the crisis began. Intent upon forcing the issues, the Soviet Government, however, on November 26th, engineered a frontier ' incident ' for which it threw the blame on Finland, and when Finland, after

producing proofs of her guiltlessness, suggested that the two Powers should investigate the matter jointly, and meanwhile both withdraw their troops from the frontier, Russia on November 28th answered by denouncing her non-aggression pact with Finland—overriding all stipulations in the pact—and breaking off diplomatic relations the next day. Finnish efforts to find a way out by means of negotiation were simply brushed aside, as were those of President Roosevelt: and on November 30th, without an ultimatum or a declaration of war, Russia proceeded to attack Finland by air, sea, and land. The peaceful inhabitants of Helsingfors and numerous other localities all of a sudden found themselves bombed and machine-gunned from the air: a harrowing total of human victims was reached, and otherwise, too, the toll of destruction was terrible.

Still, there was no panic in Finland, no despair: and one cause for confidence was the knowledge that Gustaf Mannerheim was there, to lead the armed forces of Finland, and protect her soil against the Soviet aggression. His official appointment as Commander-in-Chief was made on the very day that Finland was attacked: and emerging for the third time as his country's paladin, he at once in his first army order, published in every Finnish newspaper, found the words that the hour demanded:

‘The President of the Republic has on November 30th, 1939, appointed me Commander-in-Chief of the defence forces of the country.

‘Brave soldiers of Finland!

‘I assume this task at the moment when our hereditary enemy once again attacks our country. Confidence in one's leader is the first condition for success. You know me and I know you: and I know too that everyone in the ranks is ready to fulfil his duty even unto death. This war is nothing but the continuation of the War of Independence and its last act. We fight for our homes, our faith and our country.’

Speedy action, such as the situation demanded, was also taken in other fields. Even at the twelfth hour, Helsingfors tried over the wireless to make Moscow see reason on November 30th : but the appeal fell upon deaf ears. Thereupon, the Diet, on December 1st, accorded a unanimous vote of confidence to the Finnish Government, which, its policy vindicated, immediately resigned to give room to a War Cabinet representative of all political parties in Finland, M. Ryti, the Governor of the Bank of Finland, in politics a Progressive and once a left-wing candidate for the Presidency, became Prime Minister, while M. Tanner took over the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

Simultaneously, a curious and characteristic political manoeuvre was being attempted by Moscow. This was the setting up of a so-called Finnish Government, nominally installed in the evacuated bathing resort of Tcrijoki, on the Russian frontier, though in reality residing in, and functioning from, Moscow. It was solely composed of exiled Finnish Communists, having at its head Otto Kuusinen, the one-time member of Manner's Red Government, on whose collapse he had fled to Russia in 1918. No element of *opéra bouffe* had been omitted from this strange mushroom organization of December, 1939 : thus its personnel paraded the streets of Moscow in uniforms modelled upon those of the soldiers of Charles XII of Sweden, possibly as a magic device for surrounding them with an aura of military prestige. But for all this frivolity, the implications of Stalin's act in setting up this 'Democratic' Government without a people were serious enough. Formal treaties between the new puppet Cabinet and the Kremlin Government were concluded, Kuusinen hastening to grant Stalin all the demands which the legal Finnish Government, for all its willingness to meet Russia more than half-way, could not see its way to conceding ; and the ratifications of these precious documents were to be exchanged 'as soon as possible' at Helsingfors. Communist Russia has a way of concluding treaties of this type with other Communist Governments which it regards as null and void

the moment it suits its book. Kuusinen must know this better than most people: for on March 1st, 1918, Russia concluded a formal and detailed convention with the 'Socialist Republic of Finnish workers,' of which he was a member, which at that time held the greater part of Southern Finland under its reign of terror: but of this convention nothing was heard when, two years later, Russia concluded the Peace of Dorpat with the legal Government of Finland. Nevertheless, the fact remained that, by setting up the puppet Cabinet of Terijoki, Stalin unambiguously declared his intention of incorporating Finland with the U.S.S.R.: and the world was told in so many words that the only Finnish Government henceforth recognized by Moscow was the Kuusinen Cabinet.

Russia's attack on Finland in 1939 deserves, indeed, to become the classic instance of the way in which the *émigré* mentality inevitably gravitates towards fallacy. The *émigré* can never imagine his country as being different from what it was when he left it. In Finland, as we have seen, there was plenty of Bolshevism in 1918, when Kuusinen escaped to Russia: and there can be no doubt that he gave Stalin assurances of an easy victory in Finland, where the proletariat, he asserted, would at once rise in aid of the invaders. Of the great work of social reconciliation that had taken place in Finland, the Moscow *émigré* knew nothing: but it was strikingly borne witness to on December 3rd by a manifesto issued by the Finnish Socialist Party, and the Central Congress of the Finnish Trade Unions. Never was there a more creditable recantation than when these bodies openly declared that 'the whole of the Finnish working class can properly appreciate the possibilities which, after the difficulties of the early days, have been opened for peaceful, democratic reform and the furthering of the economic welfare and spiritual culture of the great masses of the people.' The manifesto ended: 'The will to peace of the Finnish working class is sincere. If the aggressors, nevertheless, do not wish to appreciate this will to peace of the working class, there is

nothing for the Finnish working class but to fight, arms in hand, against brute force and for the country's right to self-determination, for democracy, and peace.'

In a commemoration of the War of Independence Gustaf Mannerheim once foretold that "a day will come, when all who live in this country, irrespective of their differences of opinion on other points, will realize that the War of Independence, with its sanguinary sacrifices, prepared the way for the future happiness for the whole of our people." The Socialist and Trade Unions manifesto of December 3rd, 1939, has borne him out sooner than anyone could have anticipated.

The reaction of the world to the outrage on Finland is too fresh in everybody's memory for it to be necessary here to enter into details about it: but it certainly was a great, a wonderful thing to witness the release of indignation all the world over, the re-awakening of public conscience wherever civilized men lived. How often in the course of the past few years had people not felt tempted to close their eyes on evil things done, to compromise, to condone—for weighty reasons, maybe, or reasons at least thought to be so. The drama of Finland swept away all such half-heartedness, all such weighing of arguments for and against: all the world reacted to its triumphant sense of justice and felt all the better for it.

And, concurrently with indignation, there was admiration, ever growing, of the heroism of Finland in standing up to the Colossus attacking her, and of the absolute unity of her people behind their national leader. Here was true democracy, everyone, whether soldier or civilian, man or woman, shouldering the task allotted to him or her: and at this point it should be stressed how important was the share of the Finnish women in the common effort, notably as expressed in the semi-military volunteer organization, called the 'Lotta Svärd,' after a *cantinière* sung by Runeberg. As eye-witnesses began to arrive in Finland from other countries, there were strange and remarkable incidents: left-wing newspaper correspondents, who had gone out prepared to scoff, were

completely overcome and converted by what they saw. The pivotal position of Gustaf Mannerheim in Finland was immediately recognized by all foreign observers: and sometimes curiously halting explanations of the fact were put forward by them—for example, ‘no doubt, the Field-Marshal had “mellowed” with advancing years.’ How grotesque all that sounded to Finnish ears: there was not one of us who did not know, that Gustaf Mannerheim was now exactly the same as he had always been.

The question of international help to Finland in the struggle forced upon her, immediately presented itself: and it was not merely a question of humanitarian help—though the appeals for Finnish relief were phenomenally successful everywhere—but, above all, a question of effective military assistance. As a member of the League of Nations, Finland lost no time in appealing to Geneva against the unprovoked attack by another member. Russia, flouting the Assembly with consistent arrogance, was ignominiously expelled from the League on December 14th; and all States belonging to the League were invited to give Finland all the assistance within their power. England and France at once publicly declared their intention of doing so: and all the time, volunteers, desirous of fighting for Finland, kept on arriving there. Among these, Swedes formed the largest contingent: and one of the veteran heroes of the War of Independence, General Ernst Linder, once again hastening to fight for Finland, was appointed to lead them.

Meanwhile, all the world was watching the miracle of Finland’s resistance in a suspense which quickly changed into a chorus of marvelling at the feats of her soldiers. It was not Kuusinen and Stalin alone who had expected a lightning victory for the Russians: we all remember the estimates that were freely made on all sides—‘a week,’ ‘perhaps a fortnight,’ ‘a month at the outside.’ And as days went by, and there was nowhere a break of the Finnish lines, anxiety began to lift, and together with admiration there came gratitude for what Finland had done in showing the

world what courage, determination, and skill could achieve, if the Russian giant bully was stood up to.

The Russian land attack was launched at a number of points on the long eastern frontier of Finland: only one outlying portion in the extreme north—the district of Petsamo—was overrun by the Russians right at the outset, in the continuous winter night of the Arctic, and was held by them until the end of the campaign. On the main sector of the defence, the Mannerheim line across the Carelian Isthmus, the attack was soon being pressed with strong forces: but the tanks which looked so formidable in the military displays in the squares of Moscow, could here make no headway, and large numbers of them were destroyed or captured by the Finns from the first days of the attack. The Finns, indeed, managed to hold their advanced positions in this region much longer than had been anticipated, and as for the Mannerheim line itself, it was completely untouched. Elsewhere, there were one or two withdrawals: but the turn of the tide came, when on December 11th three enemy battalions were annihilated at Tolvajärvi, some forty miles to the north of Lake Ladoga: and the success was quickly followed up during the next few days. Well might the President of Finland on December 17th, in a radio address to the Finnish armed forces, emphasize Finland's military achievements: and his words to Gustaf Mannerheim interpreted the feelings of every Finn:

“First of all I wish cordially to thank you, the Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces, Field-Marshal Mannerheim. Despite your advanced age, you agreed at this fateful time to shoulder the responsible task of Commander-in-Chief. This you did in conformity with the unanimous wish of the people of Finland, for your patriotism, vast military experience, profound knowledge, and inborn gifts of leadership are so widely appreciated, that every eye was turned to you.”

A threat against the ‘waist’ of Finland, across the wilds of Suomussalmi on the Russian frontier, had lost its impetus by

December 15th; and here a great victory was in store for the Finnish army, though it did not materialize for some little time. Similarly an attack which, beyond the Arctic circle, was made in the direction of Rovaniemi, was decisively repulsed; and the epilogue of the operations so auspiciously begun at Tolvajärvi came in the form of a smashing defeat of the Russians in the immediate vicinity of the frontier at Ägläjäarvi. Finally, by December 24th, at one point—east of Lieksa, between Ägläjäarvi and Suomussalmi—the Finns, after driving the Russians back, had actually crossed into Soviet territory. Though the crushing superiority of the Russians in the air still enabled them to inflict a grievous loss of life and property upon the towns and villages of Finland, yet the prevailing feeling in the country was one of anything but despair; and the Christmas Order of the Day issued by the Commander-in-Chief is a moving document, reflecting the combined sentiments of deep earnestness and essential confidence with which high and low in Finland envisaged the recurrence of the great midwinter festival, since time immemorial meaning so much to all the people of the North:

‘For Christmas, the season of peace, I send my greetings to all our troops, heroically fighting on the various fronts. They are the strong bulwark which in these fateful times has made secure the peace of Christmas for our people. Our thoughts go during these Christmas days to our homes and our dear ones, while the Finnish soldier of to-day has to steel his mind and strengthen his will to fight to the end that fight, which Destiny has had in store for him. If we do not carry this fight to victory, then none of us will ever again have a home, still less a country of his own, or freedom, or the peace of Christmas.’

The message of the President to the Commander-in-Chief said much in little:

‘I send you, Field-Marshal, and through you to the heroic defenders of our freedom, my respectful Christmas

greetings. It is great to hear and see how the story of Thermopylæ is being repeated everywhere along our frontiers.'

The last week of 1939 was marked by much indiscriminate bombing from the air: the Finnish anti-aircraft defences were, however, giving an increasingly good account of themselves, and by the end of the year it was estimated that the Russians had lost at least one hundred and fifty planes. Their losses of tanks during the first month of the war were put at about four hundred: on the Carelian Isthmus alone no fewer than one thousand had been sent into action during that time. The attacks on the isthmus continued with great violence, but without achieving any result, and on the last day of the year, the Finnish G.H.Q. could report a smashing victory at Suomussalmi, after fighting which as we saw had begun some time before. Here the 163rd, or Tula Division, was completely shattered and in great part annihilated; while enormous quantities of war material fell into the hands of the Finns. The success had been gained by troops much inferior to the Russians in number, but employing bold out-flanking tactics of the type we have learnt to know as thoroughly characteristic of Gustaf Mannerheim. The Finnish soldiers, swiftly moving on skis, surrounded and isolated the Russian force, composed of men unused to the semi-Arctic climate, and wretchedly equipped and fed: the havoc wrought among them by the intense midwinter cold was gruesome indeed.

This was the first of a series of spectacular successes achieved by similar tactics which were to punctuate the remainder of the campaign: indeed, Finland did not have to wait long for the next one, which occurred once again in the district of Suomussalmi, and was reported in the G.H.Q. communiqué of January 8th. This time it was the 44th or Ukrainian division that, hurrying towards Suomussalmi from Raate on the Russian frontier, was prevented by the Finns from ever reaching its goal. Regarded as one of the crack

divisions of the Soviet army, it was most lavishly equipped : the Finnish captures amounted to 102 guns, 43 tanks, and about 300 motor cars of various kinds, including ten for anti-aircraft defence. The bulk of the force was annihilated, but over one thousand prisoners were taken by the Finns. The victory was undoubtedly one of the greatest that had ever been won on a battlefield in the north of Europe : and the political hopes which had been attached to the advance of this division were strikingly illustrated by the quantities of propaganda material—such as posters with portraits of Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders—which it brought across the frontier for distribution among the population about to be ‘liberated.’

With the second victory at Suomussalmi, the onslaught of the enemy across four points of the frontier was indeed arrested. Much of the hardest fighting in January took place in a sector which so far has not been mentioned—immediately to the north-east of Lake Ladoga. The Russian attack in this quarter had at any rate in theory—for it was unsupported by any railway lines in the vicinity of the frontier on the Russian side—the character of a movement aiming at turning the Mannerheim line in a wide sweep : and, supported by heavy artillery fire, the Russian onslaught here took on a character of extraordinary violence. All attempts at breaking the Finnish lines in this sector failed, however, completely ; and the losses of the Russians, both in men and in war material, were enormous.

The ruthless and indiscriminate bombing of Finland from the air was continued during January ; indeed ‘indiscriminate’ is the wrong word to use, since it was noticed that hospitals and ambulances marked with the Red Cross were chosen by the Russians as favourite targets, so much so that the Finnish authorities, for humanitarian reasons, had no option but to discontinue the use of the Red Cross emblem. There were days when between four hundred and five hundred raiders attacked Finland over a wide area and enormous damage was done, also the historic buildings like the ancient Castle of Abo, housing one of Finland’s finest museums,

There was much tragic loss of life, although A.R.P. naturally, as weeks went by, made considerable progress in Finland; and the Finnish air force having received some reinforcements, it was able to carry out a number of successful bombing attacks and inflict great losses on the Russian raiding squadrons. The month of January brought the total of Russian machines destroyed since the beginning of the war to close upon three hundred.

There was probably no individual figure in Europe so much in the public mind during these winter months as the Finnish Field-Marshal in his remote G.H.Q. of which the exact locality was never given out. Heavy indeed was the load of responsibility laid upon his shoulders by the task of directing Finland's resistance against an enemy whose resources were almost limitless. There were the daily and hourly problems of defence and attack, on a front of inordinate length, to be dealt with as they arose; there was the question, always to be kept in mind, of how to replenish Finland's stocks of war material. Visitors of importance, both from Finland and abroad, had to be received: and all have borne witness to the Field-Marshal's unruffled calm and dignified courtesy; to the dead earnestness with which he stressed Finland's desperate need of guns and to the power of the polished man of the world, in the midst of these relentless cares, to coin a picturesque phrase or relax into lighter conversation. His right-hand man, the Chief of the General Staff, was Lieutenant-General Oesch, a native of Carelia, once one of the Jaegers, and the commander of one of the Jaeger battalions during the War of Independence: like so many of Finland's best military leaders in her latest grim struggle, quite young when he had his first experience of fighting, and still on the right side of fifty when the second call of his country came.

The series of spectacular victories on the Eastern front north of Lake Ladoga was continued in February by the great success achieved at Syskyjärvi, in the wild rocky forest-land some twenty miles due east of the little city of Sordavala. Here, in the first days of the war, the 18th Jaroslav Infantry

division had advanced from across the frontier; it was quickly brought to a standstill and now began the brilliant work of the Finnish ski patrols, swiftly outflanking and isolating the huge Russian force. The Finnish artillery gave effective assistance; and gradually the enemy troops were cut up into numerous, scattered detachments, occupying positions which the Finns proceeded methodically to mop up. Soon famine broke out among the Russians, and the only way in which this could be relieved by the Russian command was by dropping supplies into the various positions from the air. This was, however, very ineffectively done, so the Russians, their vitality greatly lowered by the intense cold, could only hope to avoid starving to death by slaughtering their horses and existing on a diet of horse-flesh—and when this had given out, of horse-skin and bone. On February 19th the G.H.Q. could report the annihilation of the whole of this division with its reinforcements, the grand total amounting to some 18,000 men, and the capture of the entire war material of the force—twenty tanks, thirty-six guns, twenty-five motor cars, and so on *ad infinitum*. It had long been a joke among the Finns, that their best purveyors of war material were the Russians: the captures at Syskyjärvi were particularly excellent, both in quality and in condition, and, turned against their original owners, were of invaluable service to the Finns in the very last stages of this long drawn-out engagement.

Finland had scarcely recovered from the sensation caused by the news of this victory, than another stirring message came from the same part of the war theatre. This concerned the destruction of the 34th Moscow Tank Brigade, which having hurried to the rescue of the 18th Division, had been cut off from it by the Finnish ski patrols, and after one month's fighting was finally disposed of on March 1st. This brigade was one of the crack mechanized units of the Russian army, always to the fore when the strength of the Bolshevik army was demonstrated on the parade ground: now it was captured amid the snows of Carelia, on the site of a destroyed

Finnish village, violent resistance having been put up by its men to the last under the whips of the political commissars, attached to this as to the other Russian forces. It had all, however, been of no avail, and among those who fell on the Russian side were the Commander and entire staff of the 18th Division, which had sought refuge with the Tank Brigade, whose Commander was also killed in the fighting. The booty was staggering, including no fewer than 105 tanks: and through these two victories, following upon one another in rapid succession, the military position in the frontier district concerned had been restored to what it was at the outbreak of the war.

Further towards the north, in the frontier district of Kuhmo, the Finns also scored brilliant successes in the course of February. Here the Russians, taking a leaf out of the book of their intended victims, tried to employ troops on skis, three battalions strong: but the failure of the latter was a lamentable one—two thousand Russians were killed, and it was only insignificant remnants of the force that succeeded in making good their escape across the frontier. As to the morale of the troops, it was truly magnificent all along the front: every observer has laid stress on this, as on the ideal relations which existed between officers and men in this most democratic of armies. Symptomatic in this respect are various requests, which from time to time would be sent up to the authorities from the troops at the front: now it was a petition from the officers and N.C.O.s of one unit that all pay was to be equally divided between officers and men; now a request that the whole of the unit's pay was to be allocated to the purchase of munitions. And about the middle of February there was a development of capital importance in the history of the defence corps: the command of the latter and the Socialist Party, after consultation with the Congress of the Trade Unions of Finland, decided to join forces. That miracle had come to pass, which was the union, not of the White and the Red Rose, but of the White and the Red Guard: and the significance of this can best be gauged, if one remembers, that

the leader of the Finnish Socialists, M. Tanner, though not actually concerned in the 1918 rising, was for a while imprisoned by the Whites in 1918; that M. Aaltonen, the Secretary of the Socialist Party, at one time had very close connexions with Moscow; and that M. Vuori, the leader of the Finnish Trade Unionists, on account of his active participation in the Red rising, was sent to prison for a long time. The left-wing propagandists of Moscow abroad have maintained a discreet silence on these facts, preferring to harp on controversies which nothing shows more strikingly to be a thing of the past, than that Finland's left-wingers are now serving under the banner of the Moscow-made bogey Mannerheim. But there are some advocates who will go on pleading even after their clients have torn up their briefs.

We must now turn to consider developments on the Carelian Isthmus. It will be remembered that the beginning of the campaign was marked by strong attacks by mechanized forces in this sector; indeed, it is estimated that something like one thousand tanks were soon thrown against the defence of the Mannerheim Line. The artillery support for this action was, however, very indifferent, and it has been wittily remarked that those who, at the time, dictated the tactics of the Soviet army gave the impression of looking upon the gun as an antiquated *bourgeois* engine of war. Certain it is that the Russian losses in tanks were enormous, and that no results were achieved against the fortifications of the Mannerheim Line. Towards the end of December there was at times very intense artillery fire, and the same is true of the month of January, which, however, on the whole, was a period of relative calm on the Isthmus. At the beginning of February the attacks gained a previously unheard-of violence. Supported by a gun-fire of fantastic intensity, tanks and infantry flung themselves against the Finnish positions and still for a while the only outcome of the struggle was a terrific decimation of the Russian forces. It was not until February 11th that success came their way: in the western part of the Mannerheim Line, notably across the marshes of Summa, frozen as a

result of the exceptionally intense cold, the Russians managed to penetrate into the Finnish positions. Strong counter-attacks by the Finns followed, and for a few days the battle went on with fluctuating fortune: eventually, on February 15th, the Finns were obliged to fall back upon their second-line defences. Attempts to turn the Finnish positions across the frozen waters of the Bay of Finland or Lake Ladoga had met with no success; and the proclamation issued by the Commander-in-Chief on February 17th breathes a spirit of absolute confidence:

‘To the Troops on the Isthmus: Soldiers!

‘The hour has come vigorously and steadily to arrest the assault of the enemy in front of the new positions, to which I have directed you, and which I am supporting with new troops, reinforced with artillery.

‘Rest assured that the enemy will never be able to break our lines of defence, if in their depths we build up fresh positions, against which the forces of the enemy will finally bleed to death.

‘Our people no longer fights its battle alone. Foreign help has already reached our country in notable quantity and ever-increasing numbers of fighters are flocking to our banners.

‘Finnish soldiers! The development of the situation offers us all possibilities of success.

‘The people of Finland stand united behind us, confiding in our strength. Let us remain firm and unshakable in our belief in a final victory.’

The reference to Finland as no longer fighting her battle alone must be read above all in connexion with the willingness to give active help to her which by now was defining itself more and more clearly among the Allies, and to which notably M. Daladier gave eloquent and emphatic expression. The Finnish Commander-in-Chief had all along been quite clear in his mind, that Finland could only hope ultimately to resist the Russian onslaught with the help of Allied rein-

forcements in men, and about the middle of January—as Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons on March 19th—he intimated that his needs would be met, if by May some 30,000 trained Allied soldiers were supporting him in Finland. The February developments on the Isthmus then modified the situation; and speed being essential, Finland now turned for military help to the nearest quarter—to Sweden. On February 13th, the Finnish Foreign Secretary, M. Tanner, flew to Stockholm, and placed before the Swedish Government a request for military assistance. This was, obviously, not based on any sentimental reason but on the plain, unanswerable fact that a Finland dominated by Soviet Russia would constitute the gravest possible threat to Swedish independence. Nevertheless, the Finnish request was refused by the Swedish Government: and not only would there be no military aid from Sweden, but it was also made clear that Sweden would resist, by all possible means, the passage through Sweden of foreign troops going to the assistance of Finland. Obviously, if Sweden wanted her army to watch idly, as the Soviet forces overran Finland, that was her own affair: but it cannot be stressed sufficiently strongly that the refusal to let foreign troops pass through Sweden on their way to help Finland constituted a grave breach of international law. As a member of the League of Nations, Sweden was bound by Article 16 of the Covenant, which stipulates that the members of the League ‘will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any of the members which are co-operating to protect the Covenant of the League.’ Sweden and Norway had, some years previously, declared, that they did not consider themselves bound by this stipulation: but a one-sided reservation of that nature was obviously nugatory. If Sweden and Norway objected to the Covenant, they could leave the League; but as long as they belonged to the League, they were inevitably bound by the Covenant.

The official reason given for Sweden’s military inaction and breach of international law was, in the phraseology of

diplomacy, her desire to preserve her neutrality in the European war. Everybody knew of course what this meant: that Germany was going to attack Sweden if she became a party, active or passive, to help reaching Finland. By this time the improvement in Russian tactics on the Isthmus could, with virtual certainty, be traced to the expert help given by German officers to the Russian Army; and through her action with regard to Sweden, Germany now emerged in full daylight as the determined and sinister enemy of Finland.

Meanwhile, in readiness for every eventuality, preparations for official military intervention on behalf of Finland were being energetically pushed on in France and England; and on February 14th it was announced in the House of Commons, that a general licence had been granted to British subjects to enlist in the Finnish forces.

In Finland, the beginning of March saw a number of engagements along the Eastern front north of Lake Ladoga, some of them very violent ones: in many cases, brilliant successes were registered by the Finns, and operations were methodically pushed forward by them at various points in the hope of eventually bringing about victories which would take their place alongside of those of Suomussalmi and Syskyjärvi. The key to the whole situation was, however, naturally at the Isthmus. Here the activity of the Russian artillery continued on the same unprecedented scale as before; and the weather, which for part of the campaign had produced certain advantages for the Finns, now turned definitely in favour of the invaders. None of the snowstorms, which usually mark this time of the year in Finland, materialized in 1940; the days were clear and bright, as only March days in the north of Europe can be. Moreover, the cold continued intense—the whole winter, having, indeed, been the coldest in Finland for some sixty years. In consequence, the ice on the Bay of Wiborg was of a carrying capacity which was quite exceptional: and this proved an enormous advantage to the Russians, first of

Central Press Photo

THE GHOST ARMY IN ACTION





FIELD-MARSHAL MANNRITHILIM AT G.H.Q., FEBRUARY, 1940

all as the struggle shifted to the islands which fringe the eastern shore of the Bay, and subsequently for their attempts to turn the Finnish positions by advancing to the western shore. Hampered by lack of guns and ammunition, and worn out by the incessant struggle, from which there was no relief, the Finnish troops fought on, inflicting terrible losses on the enemy: but eventually one position after the other had to be given up, and on March 8th the Russians managed to secure a foothold on the north-west shore of the Bay. Wiborg, bombed continuously from the air and shelled by long-range guns as long ago as Christmas, was in ruins and completely emptied of its population. Its ancient cathedral, where the thanksgiving service had been held on May 1st, 1918, had been grievously damaged by Russian bombs: but the magnificent medieval castle still stood, majestic amid all this desolation and destruction, the Valhalla of Carelia's *Götterdämmerung*.

Faint-heartedness among the Finns there was none; and when, on the Wiborg front, ammunition sometimes gave out completely, the fight was carried on by the Finns solely with their national weapon, the *punkko* knife, in grim hand-to-hand combat. Moreover, if things were critical round Wiborg, on the north-eastern side of the Isthmus round Taipale the line held as firmly as ever.

Whilst the epic struggle went on, diplomatic moves of far-reaching importance had been started. As far back as February 22nd the Soviet Ambassador in London approached the British Government with a request to communicate terms to Finland, upon which the Russian Government would be prepared to conclude peace. In the opinion of the British Government the terms proposed were, however, of so drastic a nature that they could not possibly be put up to Finland by a Government friendly to that country; and so the British Government took no action. The Swedish Government, when similarly approached, accepted, however, with eagerness to act as postman. On March 8th, the Finnish Government let it be known, through the Finnish Press, that the Soviet

Government was proposing peace on terms which went beyond those put forward during the negotiations in the autumn of 1939; the details were, however, not yet known. Three days later the veil of official secrecy was lifted a little more: it was now revealed that, at the invitation of the Soviet Government, a Finnish Delegation had left for Moscow on March 6th in order to open negotiations, but that so far nothing had been decided. The members of the Delegation were the Prime Minister, M. Ryti, Dr. Paasikivi, General Waldén, and Professor Voionmaa. On this mission, General Waldén may be said to have represented the direct liaison with the Commander-in-Chief, while Professor Voionmaa was a Socialist member of the Diet and a specialist on treaties relating to Finland's frontiers.

Characteristically, the Soviet Government now quietly dropped Kuusinen and his Terijoki Government, despite all assurances in December that his was the only Finnish Government with which the Kremlin would henceforth treat. As to the terms of peace, they certainly went far beyond those which preceded the Russian aggression, and every pretence was now dropped of respecting the integrity of the Finnish territory or the Finnish people's right to self-determination. The whole of the Carelian Isthmus with the city of Wiborg; the whole of the Bay of Wiborg with its islands and all islands in the Gulf of Finland, as far as Hogland; the territory west and north of Lake Ladoga, including the cities of Kexholm and Sordavala and the village of Suojärvi, Lake Ladoga thus becoming a Russian lake; a large slice of Finnish territory north of Märkäjärvi and Kuolajärvi; and the Western portion of the Fisherman Peninsula—all this was to go to Russia without any compensation to Finland. Hangö and its district were moreover to be leased to Russia for thirty years. So much for the territorial claims. In addition, the retention of Petsamo was subjected to a number of irksome conditions; a right of way for Soviet Russia across Finland to Sweden by the shortest route was to be granted, for which purpose a railway was to be built jointly

by both countries from Kandalaksha to Kemijärvi ; and both countries were to give a pledge of non-aggression against one another and of not concluding any alliances or taking part in any conditions directed against the other.

These terms were put forward by Russia partly on the strength of her own immense resources, and partly because she knew that Germany would resist any attempt by the Allies to come to the assistance of Finland across Sweden and Norway. It was now for the Finnish Government to make its decision. There was no doubt of the readiness of England and France to send an expeditionary force of 100,000 men to Finland, to enable her to continue the fight—if Finland would ask for that help to be sent. But against this there was the equal determination of Sweden and Norway to resist, at all cost, help being sent to Finland. They would do anything rather than see the Germans invading Scandinavia . . .

And so the Finnish Government, all things considered—and as yet the full story cannot be told, least of all by a Finn—decided to accept the Russian terms. They created an utterly artificial state of things in Finland ; they shut vast productive areas off from their natural outlet ; they meant the loss of enormous economic values ; they entailed the re-settlement of half-a-million people within the mutilated territory of Finland, for no Finn would consent to live under the Bolsheviks : but all was stoically accepted. The ultimate reason for this was the consciousness that a Nation which has come through an ordeal such as Finland's, more united than ever before in its history—with its army, too, essentially intact, and unbroken in spirit—that such a Nation need not despair of its future.

The ratification of the Peace of Moscow was agreed to by the Finnish Diet on March 15th ; with 145 votes against three.

One thing more should be said : that if Finland had thought that in Gustaf Mannerheim's opinion she should have gone on fighting, nothing would have stopped her from doing so. But it was known that he was in favour of accepting the peace terms ; and that was decisive.

On March 13th, Gustaf Mannerheim issued his farewell message to the army: a document in which you can feel the beating of the heart of all Finland and hear the voice of her greatest son.

Here it is:

‘Soldiers of Finland’s glorious army! Peace has been concluded between our country and Soviet Russia. It is a hard peace, handing over to the Soviet practically every battle-field on which you have shed your blood for all that you hold dear and sacred.

‘You did not want war. You loved peace, work, and progress. But the fight was forced upon you, and the deeds you have performed will shine for centuries in the annals of history. More than fifteen thousand of you who went out will not see their homes again, and how many are they who have not lost for ever their ability to work! But you have hit back hard, and if two hundred thousand of the enemy now lie beneath the frozen snows or with sightless gaze contemplate our starry skies, the blame does not lie with you. You did not hate them. You wished them no harm. You merely followed the stern law of war: to kill or be killed.

‘Soldiers! I have fought on many battle-fields, but never yet have I seen your equals. I am proud of you, just as if you were my own children, equally proud of him from the Northern Tundras, of him from the wide plains of Ostrobothnia, from the Carelian woods, from the smiling lands of Savolax. I am as proud again of those who come from the flourishing farms of Tavastland and Satakunta, of those from the whispering birchwoods of Nyland and Finland Proper.

‘I am proud of the sacrifice of life and limb made by all and sundry—the factory worker, the peasant lad, the rich man.

‘Officers and men, I thank you all. But I particularly wish to draw attention to the courage and devotion to duty of the reserve officers, and the skill with which they carried out a work which normally was not theirs. Also, their sacrifice

was in proportion the greatest in the War, and given gladly and with unswerving loyalty.

‘I thank the Staff Officers for their ability and untiring work. Finally I thank my nearest colleagues—the Chief of the General Staff, the Quartermaster-General, the Army Commanders, the Corps and Divisional Commanders, who in many cases made the impossible possible.

‘I thank all the Services of the Finnish Army, who in brilliant combat achieved such fine exploits, and who, from the first day of the War, went with great boldness to the attack of an enemy many times stronger and armed with weapons often unknown to us. I thank them for the tenacity with which they clung to every inch of soil of their native land. The destruction of more than fifteen hundred Russian tanks and over seven hundred aeroplanes bears witness to the heroic deeds frequently performed by individual men.

‘With joy and pride I think of Finland’s “Lottas” and of their contribution to the War, their spirit of sacrifice and untiring work in all branches, which has liberated thousands of men for the front line. With their courageous spirit they spurred on and supported the army whose gratitude and appreciation they fully earned.

‘A place of honour has been filled by the thousands of workers who, during the bitterest days of the War, and under air attacks, faithfully, and often as volunteers, remained at their work producing the necessities of war; and also those who under enemy fire untiringly worked on the fortifications. In the name of our country I thank you all.

‘Despite all courage and the will to sacrifice, the Government has been forced to make a peace on hard terms. This nevertheless has its explanation.

‘Our army, including reserves, was insufficient: we were not equipped for a war with a great power. While our brave soldiers were defending our frontier, it was necessary with superhuman efforts to make up the deficiencies, to create a line of defence which before did not exist, and to seek the help which did not arrive. It was a question of getting arms and

equipment, at a time when our country was feverishly preparing for the storm which is now sweeping over the world.

‘Your deeds have aroused admiration the whole world over; but after three and a half months of war we still stand alone. We did not succeed in obtaining any foreign aid, beyond two battalions reinforced by some artillery and aeroplanes, whilst our own troops, fighting day and night, without a chance of relief, stood up to the attacks of every new enemy formation till long past physical and moral breaking point.

‘When one day the history of this war is written, the world will see what deeds you have performed.

‘Without the generous help of ammunition and equipment given by Sweden and the Western Powers we could not have withstood for so long the innumerable guns, tanks, and aeroplanes which were thrown against us.

‘Unfortunately, the magnificent promise of help given us by the Western Powers could not be fulfilled, owing to our neighbours’ concern for their own safety. They refused the right of passage to the Allied Troops.

‘After sixteen weeks of fierce struggle, without resting day or night, our army stands to-day unbeaten by an enemy which, in spite of enormous losses, has only grown in numbers. Neither has our home front wavered, despite the innumerable air attacks which have spread death and terror among our women and children. Our towns, which have been burnt down, our ruined villages lying far behind the front, even as far back as the western frontier, are a striking witness of what our people have had to undergo during the past months.

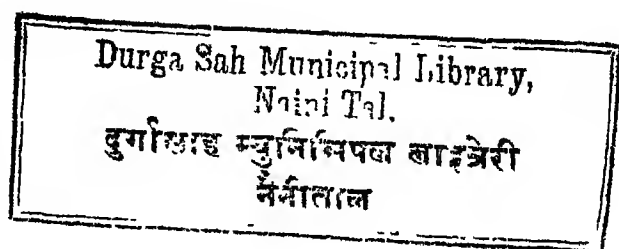
‘It is a hard fate for us now that we have been obliged to give up to a race, which is foreign and of a different philosophy and moral standards, land which we tilled for centuries by the sweat of our brow.

‘We will spare no effort to provide homes and better living conditions within the remaining territories for all those whose houses and property have been ruined. And we will be prepared as before to defend our diminished Finland with

the same determination and strength with which we fought for her undivided.

'We have the proud knowledge that we have a historic mission to fulfil: to protect the western civilization which for centuries has been part of our heritage. We also know that we have paid to the last penny that debt which we have owed to the West.'

In the afternoon of the day when this message went out, a handful of soldiers assembled, in Wiborg, war-scarred but still unconquered, at the Castle, still flying the flag of Finland from its tower. It was not the moment for long or elaborate ceremonies: but honour was paid to Finland's army and those who had fallen in her latest fight, all the more movingly for the war-like simplicity of the ceremony. Then the flag of Finland was lowered half-mast; hoisted aloft again to fly in the March wind for a few instants; and lowered again, to be guarded, and treasured, in faith and hope. . . .



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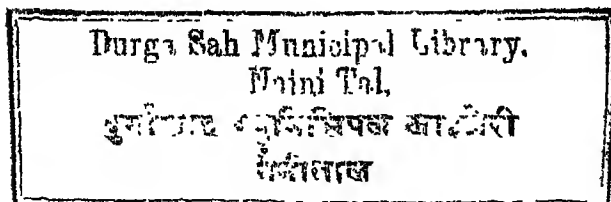
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